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THE
YULE LOG.

A SERIES OF STORIES

FOR THE YOUNG.

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INTRODUCTION.

It was an old custom, and one that still holds in many parts of England, to cut and dry, in order for burning, an enormous log, or "clog," as it was anciently called; the trunk or root of a very large tree was generally used, which on "Merrie" Christmas Eve was paraded into the house, the father bearing it in his arms, and his family marching after to the sound of music. It was then introduced into the great kitchen fire-place, and having lighted it with a brand which had been carefully preserved from the last year's clog, the household drew about the cheerful fire, and inspired by its warmth, and deep draughts of nut-brown ale, "the song and tale went round." Many such a Christmas Eve

have I sat and listened to the tales so marvelous and strange; and now, far away from those bygone scenes, I have striven to snatch from the decaying embers of memory, a little brand to light for my youthful readers a new "Yule Clog" for the coming Christmas season.

G. M. B.

GOLDEN HILL, }
November, 1858. }

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THE YULE LOG.

I.

THE BOY AND HIS SILVER WINGS.

A LITTLE boy used to sit and gaze at the stars, and wonder and wonder. One in particular caught his attention ; it was full and round, and shone with a clear, steady light. One summer evening as he sat in the balcony, he saw it rise above the horizon, and then gradually go up higher and higher. He was so full of thought, and so intent watching it, that he forgot everything about him, till his mother came to him, put her hand on his shoulder, and told him it was bed-time.

After he had gone to bed, he dreamed of his star, and presently awakening, his mind was so full of it, that he would steal out softly, while all in the house were asleep, and see what had

become of it. When he reached the balcony he could not at first find it, as it had changed its place while he had been slumbering, but on looking directly overhead, there it was shining down upon him, and as he looked steadily at it, he thought that it seemed almost to smile at him, and twinkle more and more. By and by he remembered he had heard that the stars were worlds like our own, and that there were, most likely, inhabitants in them. He then wondered if the people were like his father and mother and himself; and a longing came into his heart to go to the star and learn all about it, and he stretched out his arms to it and cried aloud, "My own beautiful star, shall I ever be ready to read you and to know all your glories?"

While he was still yearning and crying, a bright angel stood before him and cried, "Poor boy, why do you weep?" The boy answered, "Because I am bound down to the earth, and can never go to yonder shining star that seems to be calling me."

The angel said, "Do you really then so desire to see it?" and the boy told her how he

had been wishing and wishing for it. "Then," said the angel, "I will give you this pair of wings, by which you may fly upward to the star;" and as she spoke she fastened a pair of silver wings upon his shoulders, and having instructed him how to use them, added, "As long as these are kept brightly polished, they will bear you upward whenever you may desire it, but if suffered to grow dull and to get tarnished, they will no longer avail you."

The boy thanked her, and felt sure that he never should neglect to keep the angel's gift, which was to be the source of so much happiness to him, bright and shining as now. She then left him. Again looking at the star, and spreading forth his wings, as directed, he began gently to arise, fluttering and tumbling like a young bird taking its first flight; but gaining boldness as he ascended, he breathed freer, till at last he soared far, far on high, to the star, the beacon towards which he was directing his course; his bosom swelled triumphantly, and looking back, he saw the earth receding like a dull spark beneath him. O, how unlike the

glorious light before him! When at last he reached the golden gates, where stood the angel waiting to receive him, his eyes were so dazzled with the brightness that burst upon him, when first he entered, he could no longer perceive anything around him, but was, for a time, as one blind. Soon, however, regaining his vision, he began to descry beings unlike those that he had ever seen before, almost transparent, with wings of golden gauze, sweeping hither and thither; forward bending their pinions, they skimmed along like beams of light—myriads upon myriads passing to and fro, some bearing harps, from whose strings such notes arose as mortal ne'er has heard. Unlike the toiling inhabitants of earth, these beings knew no labor, no hunger, no thirst—all was life, freedom, and enjoyment. The boy's soul was stirred within him; he could have shouted aloud for joy and gladness.

But now the angel told him that he must return to earth. At this intelligence the boy's heart grew sad, and he exclaimed, "Bright angel, let me ever remain here—let this be

forever more my home!" To this the angel replied, "Your time on earth is appointed—you must fulfill your days,—but while you still keep these wings bright, you can be permitted such glimpses of this world above you as may refresh your weary heart, and when the time for your sojourn beneath is ended, this higher sphere may be your eternal home."

The angel attended him through the golden portals,—descended with him to the earth again, and alighted upon the same spot from whence he had arisen.

The boy sat himself to work after the angel had left him, to erase from his wings every dull speck that the dampness of the night had left upon them; and presently, when polished as a mirror, and he had laid them carefully away, he retired to rest again and slept till the morning dawned. When he had arisen and looked forth, the scene which used to be so dazzling, now looked dull and blank to him, in comparison with the light of his beloved star. All day long his thoughts were there, and when night came again, he was once more

trying his new-found wings toward the heavens. Every successive flight became easier and more delightful to him, and the fleet moments spent among those superior beings became of far more consequence than whole days with his earthly friends. Though short his visits there, he became, as it were, like those glorious beings—and it was remarked by all, that the child's face shone with an unearthly light, though none knew of his flights to the star above, or the secret of his silver wings.

O! had this childlike obedience to the injunction of the angel continued, what happiness might the boy have always enjoyed! how would these nightly visits to the star have solaced him during the weary hours of his pilgrimage below! But the demon of idleness came at length, stealing in. With diligence *at first*, he polished, nightly, the silver wings; but soon the task became irksome, and was performed less thoroughly—at times omitting it altogether, till they became each day more difficult to use. He deferred his visits, and made them less frequent, till one night, after

having neglected his opportunities for a longer period than ever, in attempting to rise with them, he found that they had entirely lost their power. On taking them off to see the cause of his failure, he beheld the once shining wings of silver so tarnished, that not one bright spot in them was visible. A burst of grief followed this discovery, and he cried again to the angel to come to him in his distress; but finding no answer to his petition he laid them aside and endeavored to forget all about them.

The boy became a man. In the lonely night, sometimes, the visions of his boyhood, and his visits to the star, would present themselves to his memory, and he would have a momentary longing for the brightness of those days, but as soon would he dismiss them, and even doubt that he had ever known such hours of bliss. He would say, "The silver wings were never mine—it was a fantasy of a diseased fancy, born of ignorance and superstition, which the light of the sun of manhood has dissipated;" and then he would weave in his fertile brain plans for an earthly future, more suiting the changed

state of his soul than the revelations of his youth.

He passed the summer of his manhood, and in the autumn, crowned with success, he looked for the peace that never came. He found that in every rose of earth is hid a thorn, and when the winter of age advanced toward him, it found him a poor old man, seeking again the home of his boyhood; and there, with his grandchildren about him, looking forward to a termination and a transit from the present scene. And now, as the second childhood came upon him, his old habits grew; and one of them, gazing and longing for that one bright star, resumed its old force, so that night after night he would be found with his eyes upturned; but the tears would dim them, when he thought of the days, when, at his pleasure, he could have reached its golden gates; but now he was shut out, and each day he grew sadder and sadder as he contemplated its undimmed splendor.

One day his grandchild ran to him and cried, "O! grandpa, see what I have found, while searching among the lumber in the attic!"

The old man took from the hands of the wondering boy, a little pair of black and tarnished wings; he knew at once the angel's gift to his boyhood, and the tears flowed down his furrowed cheeks. He took the child on his knee, and told him all about the bright star, the angel, and the silver wings, which his careless idleness had suffered to grow dim till they lost forever their power. The child heard and believed—wept, as his grandsire wept—and after the tale had ceased, he paused awhile—yet presently exclaimed, “But can these wings never again be made as bright! O let us try together, and see if they may not shine as before!”

A bright change came upon the face of the old man, and with his trembling hands, assisted by those of the child, (both feeble, yet both untiring,) commenced the work. Very slow, indeed was the progress they made in removing the rust that years had accumulated; but at length, by little and little, the pale silver shone amid the blackness, till one night, after long and patient labor, the child, with joyous

shouts and gladness, and the old man with a calm, placid smile amid his tears, announced that "the work was completed." Calmly he folded and laid away the polished wings, but at midnight, when the child and all the household were hushed and silent, the tottering old man stood in the place, (with his silver wings,) where years before he had stood, with his eyes now, as then, raised to the star; he stretched his arms toward it and mounted up, till on entering the golden gates, they closed behind him. The star was his resting-place forever.

II.

THE SPARROW AND THE FAIRY.

A FAIRY once stood by the sea-shore, watching the foam, as it dashed upon the beach, when an ocean bird caught her up in its beak, and flew with her far away over the waters. They came, at last, directly above the deck of a vessel, and one of the mariners, seeing a black speck in the sky, discharged a musket, which so frightened the bird, it let the fairy drop down on the ship, but while she was falling, she had the precaution to take the form of a sparrow to conceal herself. The sailors gathered round, and wondered to see a sparrow, so far away from the land, and one of them was going to fling it overboard, when a little cabin-boy ran forward, and begged that it might be given to him, which was done, and he ran with the panting trembling thing into

the store-room, where, amid the boxes and hampers of provisions, he made his poor bed, of straw and a blanket. He found an empty orange-box, placed a little nest of wool in the corner, in which he put the sparrow, and then went out again to his work; but came in often during the day, to see how it was getting along. At night he drew it up to his own bed, and was just going to sleep, when out of the box sprang the prettiest lady in green, about six inches high, that you ever saw in your life. The boy got up, and opened his eyes in wonder, and she came and sat down on his bed by him. He then looked into his box, and missing his sparrow, burst into tears. When she asked him what was the matter; he told her that he cried because his sparrow was gone, and in a twinkling, the little lady had vanished, and the sparrow was in its nest, as snug and warm as before. The next day, every chance he could get, he would be running in to look at his sparrow, and when night came again, and the door was fastened, out jumped the little lady in green, who came and played nice little

games with him, and told him wonderful stories, and so fond did he grow of her, he did not mind that the sparrow disappeared, as soon as the little green lady came.

He used so often to run into his room, to talk with her, that it began to be remarked by the sailors; that the boy who was always before on deck, was now moping down in the cabin, by himself, and they resolved to watch him, and see what he did there. So one of them stood by the door, when he entered, and when it was shut, he thought he heard voices talking, and, peeping through the keyhole, saw a little green lady, dancing over the boxes as light as a feather. He told this to the others, and they determined to find out the truth, so they burst open the door suddenly, and went in; but nothing was to be seen of the lady in green, or anything else, but the boxes, the little boy, and the sparrow in his warm nest; so after speaking roughly to the little fellow, all the sailors went out, no wiser than they came in. But from this time, his mates began to look upon him with distrust and suspicion: though

before a favorite, he came to be much disliked by them, and they were very unkind to him; but the boy did not mind it, so long as he had such a good friend as the fairy.

But one night as a dreadful storm arose, so that they could no longer guide the vessel, they all declared the boy was the cause of their trouble—that he dealt in witchcraft, and must be thrown overboard, or the ship and all in it would sink. Notwithstanding that he begged them, with the tears pouring down his cheeks, to spare him, they were so hard-hearted as to pay no attention to his beseeching tones, and when he found that they were in earnest, he only asked them to let him go into his berth, for a few minutes, to say his prayers; to which they consented. He then took his sparrow, and put it in his bosom, that it might not be ill-treated after he had gone, and went out to them. A great rough sailor instantly seized him, and flung him with a whirl, over the side of the vessel. For a moment he hung above the glittering waves, that dashed, and foamed, and yawned, as if to swallow him alive, then

he shut his eyes, and felt the cold waters rush and close over his head, and down, down, into the darkness, he kept sinking, sinking, till he heard the sea-monsters dash past him, and expected every moment to be devoured by them; but no, he escaped them all, and kept on falling, down, down. At last, he seemed to slip out of the waters, as it were, into clouds, and then into clear air, and hung a moment suspended in the sky, till he came plump on to the very softest and greenest turf, which yielded beneath him like a bed. He was not at all hurt, and getting up looked around bewildered, till feeling something stir in his bosom, he opened his vest, and out hopped the little green lady, and stood before him.

“Now,” said she, “I can repay you for all your care of me. I am a fairy, and this is one of my homes, and I can show you in a moment many of my kindred.” So saying, she blew a little bugle at her side, and many like herself began to flock about, and welcome her to her home. She gave command to them to bring some food, and directly these busy little people

went to work, and spread on a little rocky table, the snowiest of cloths and the most delicious repast. After his hunger had been satisfied, the fairy pointed to the sky, and said: "Above those clouds, lies the sea, through which you have just now passed; this is what you call the bottom of the ocean, where dwell mermaids, sea-nymphs, and fairies. The boy looked up, and wondered what prevented the ocean from coming down upon his head, and then reasoned to himself if that was not also a great sea, which he had called the sky over his mother's cottage, and if that was not where all the rain came from? But he did not think long about this, for the fairy had such sights to show him, as he had never even dreamed of before, the houses were formed of coral, and pearls, and instead of glass, the windows had large slabs of pure diamond, to admit the light; the very pebbles under his feet were the most costly jewels, and the sun shining on them, dazzled his eyes, so that he could scarcely see. The fairy had a splendid mansion constructed for the boy, and a chariot, made of shells, and

little fairy horses, so small that it took six or them to draw him. He had servants to wait on him, his table was supplied every day, with the most luscious fruits; he heard the sweetest music, and the fairy herself used to spend the most of her time with him, yet she noticed that he was often silent and sad. One day she found him weeping, and begged him to tell her the cause of his grief,—if there was anything yet wanting to complete his happiness? The boy dried his tears, and answered her. “Dear little lady, I have everything that heart can desire; fairies to wait on me, and anticipate my wishes; nothing to do but to amuse myself from morn till eve; but when I am enjoying all these things, my heart goes back to my poor widowed mother, who used to be always toiling for me, and I think that perhaps she is even now sick, or starving, for want of proper food; while I am idling here, she may be wearing herself out, in laboring for the support of my dear little brother, whom I long to see again; and even if she has been provided with the necessities of life, I am sure that her heart is sad, for she

most likely thinks that I am drowned in the ocean, and that I shall never again return to her. Do not then be astonished, if in the midst of all this beauty, and my good fortune, I am sad and weep."

The fairy answered him: "You are a good child, not to forget your poor mother, and though I should be glad to have you remain with me forever, yet I can well see, that you would be happier to be with her and your little brother. Stay here at least a year, and then I will find means to send you to her."

"Oh! thank you," cried the boy; "but my dear little lady, if you can send me home a year hence, you must be able to send me now; who knows but my mother may die of grief or of starvation long before that. Oh! if it is not asking too much, let me go at once."

The fairy then looked very sad, and told the boy that after his return to earth and his mother she would never again be able to reveal herself to him in her own proper shape, or make herself known to him. The boy was sad to learn this, yet still he begged to go to his dear mother.

Then the fairy, though so sorry to part with him, told him that he should see his home that very night; and accordingly, when evening came, the fairy and himself were taken in the arms of a mermaid, and carried up through the sea, till they rose upon the surface, and he saw the stars and the blue sky above, and knew that they were the same stars and sky that shone over his mother's cottage. Soon they reached the land, and the mermaid left them upon the shore; and the fairy, beckoning to a swan that was in sight, mounted with the boy on its back, as it stood by her side. She and the little boy rose high up in the air, and were borne swiftly over towns, cities, mountains, rivers and vallies. At last, as the shades of night were passing away, and morn began to break, the scenes became more familiar to him, till the fairy, pointing beneath them, showed him the woods, and the hills, amid which he knew was his own little home. At her signal, the swan gently descended, and the boy's heart bounded lightly, as he felt his feet once more rest upon the firm ground, and looked around on a scene

so familiar and so dear ; but his gladness left him when the fairy said : “ We must here part. Never again shall I be permitted to reveal myself to you ; but nightly, though unseen by you, I shall visit this spot ; when all goes well with you and your mother, and everything prospers to your wishes, think that the fairy has been here, and at work.”

Before the boy could speak to her, she gently kissed him, at bidding him adieu, mounted again on the back of the swan, high in the air, and waving farewell with her hand, as she was lost in the distant cloud, the boy saw her no more.

He stood gazing forgetfully after she had disappeared, and then remembering himself, hastened on to the cottage. The blue smoke was struggling up the chimney, and he knew that the morning fire was kindled. The old brindled cow stood before the door, and his mother, with the milk-pail in her hand, and her little child toddling beside her, came forth, without seeing him, and began to seat herself to milk ; the little boy, however, espied him,

and cried out, "Oh, brother! brother!" The mother started up, and seeing the well-known features of her son, burst into tears, as she clasped him to her heart. He was as one restored from the dead, for the wicked crew who had returned home from the ship, reported that he had fallen overboard and was drowned; but her joy was now full, when she found that he was never going to leave her again.

During the winter nights as they sat by the fireside, he used to tell her and his little brother all about the good fairy, and the wonders that he had seen; and when the harvest came, and they gathered in a full crop of corn and fruit, (their neighbors' crops had all been blighted,) he used to say to his mother, "The fairy has surely been here." And as everything worked to their advantage, and they were well provided for, they never forgot her or her promise to him.

III.

THE PRINCESS AND THE ROSE.

ON a green island in the Pacific Ocean, that has never been put down on any map, lived a king called Obezon, who married a very beautiful woman, the queen of a country lying away to the northward. She was attended when she came from her home by a nurse, who was a fairy. The warm climate did not agree with her, and she died shortly after, leaving a daughter in the care of the fairy, of whom, at her birth, it was foretold that she should live only till she was separated from her first love. She was very fair, with golden curls, eyes of azure, and delicate rose-tinted cheeks. The fairy nursed her faithfully, and never trusted her out of her sight, for she, as well as Obezon, was ambitious that Gulna should make a splendid match; and remembering the prophecy that she

would die if separated from her first love, they kept her very strictly out of the way of all the youth, the sons of the petty princes near them, to whom a young maiden would be likely to give her heart. But the fame of her beauty had so gone abroad, many of them sought the island in disguise, on purpose to see her and win her love; but none of them were able to escape the vigilance of Obezon and the fairy. So Gulna had reached her seventeenth year with her heart untouched, and spent her hours in roaming with the fairy about the island.

Now there was in the employ of Obezon a poor boy, who tended the sheep. He wandered every day with his flock over the meadows, and played sweet little tunes upon pipes made of the hollow reeds. He was so modest, he hardly ever raised his head, and had never seen the beautiful countenance of the Princess, although they encountered each other daily; nor had she noticed the young lad, who, too humble to cause the fairy any misgivings, was permitted to come before her. One day a favorite lamb had broken its leg, and the fairy,

who was setting it, summoned the boy to her assistance, while Gulna held it in her arms, and, bending together over the little moaning thing, their eyes met, and he never after forgot the sweet glance of the Princess, nor she the dark, flashing orbs of the shepherd-boy. Day after day they met each other, and though no word had been spoken, they contrived by looks and glances to become better acquainted, till they at last interchanged a few words, and planned a stolen interview at night, when all the household was at rest, in a little grove not far away. They succeeded in deceiving the fairy while she was sleeping soundly, and thought that the Princess was likewise reveling in golden dreams beside her. This continued for a long while without discovery, and Gulna and Azor grew more and more attached to each other, and swore eternal fidelity. One night the fairy awoke, and feeling the cool breeze blow upon her (for Gulna had forgotten to close the window through which she had stolen out, as she had always done before), she she started up in affright. The moon was

shining through the open shutters, and showed the bed of the Princess without an occupant. "Surely the Princess had been stolen away." She dared not alarm Obezon. She flung herself from the window, in hopes of finding some traces to aid her in her search, but could find not even a footstep. On passing the little grove at the foot of the garden, with the fountain beside it, she heard a sound of voices mingling with the falling waters, and, stealing up softly, what was her dismay at there beholding Gulna and Azor together, she seated on a mound of turf, and he kneeling at her side, placing a white rose in her belt; and oh! horrors! Gulna threw her white arms round his neck, and said, "You are, indeed, my first love, from whom I cannot be separated till death." But they were startled from this loving embrace by the fairy, who in a fury stood before them. "Foolish maiden," cried she, fiercely, "thus to fling from you rank, honor, wealth, and all for a miserable little wretch like this;" "and you," said she, turning white in her anger, as she looked at Azor, "who have had the presumption to

raise your eyes upon the most beautiful Princess in the world, knowing that she cannot be severed from him whom she has first loved, and live, I can by my power at once punish you for your audacity, and save the Princess from the consequences of her indiscretion. Henceforth be invisible, and take for your dwelling-place this rose, which shall ever cling to the heart of the Princess, by which your hand has placed it." And touching him with her wand, he dissolved, as it were, into air; but the rose at Gulna's side, which had been pure white, grew red, as if dyed by human blood. Gulna's grief, when she saw her lover thus enthralled, was boundless. Her tears and entreaties made no impression on the fairy, or Obezon, when he had learned the truth. Great indeed was his rage when he found what had taken place; and Gulna could only tremble, and be silent. He heartily approved of the summary manner in which the fairy had disposed of poor Azor, and had got him out of the way of the Princess, leaving her still free to marry whom they should choose for her.

She was now allowed to go at large, and the King made it known that he was in readiness, when a proper offer was made, to betroth her. Suitors came from all quarters, but were, one after another, rejected by Obezon, as not being worthy of her, Gulna all the while remaining quite insensible to all that was taking place around her, rarely raising her eyelids; her eyes were ever fixed upon a deep red rose at her side, which never withered, but grew brighter in its hue from day to day. This singular flower was noticed by all who came to visit the island, and the "blood-red rose" became as celebrated as the beautiful Princess herself. Her lovers rallied her on her attachment to it, but no one was ever allowed to take it from her for a moment, or even to touch it. The King and the fairy, who were the only ones who knew about it, were wise enough to keep their own counsel, so it remained still a mystery that none could solve. After very many suitors had been rejected, one came at last, richer than all the rest. He brought the most costly gifts, and his long train of attendants, their waving plumes, the glitter

ing chariots and prancing horses, and the reports that came before him of his wealth, so prejudiced Obezon in his favor, he determined that he would bestow the hand of the Princess upon this great Prince, if she should please him; so he caused Gulna to be dressed in her robes of silver and blue, and to be brought before him. The Prince had never before seen one that would in any wise compare with her in beauty, so he declared himself at once her suitor, and spread before her the most costly jewels, and magnificent gifts; but these, and the noble form and countenance of the Prince, made no impression upon the heart of Gulna, for that was already given to Azor. But her father commanded her to get herself in readiness to depart with the Prince, and she dared not disobey. The marriage was accordingly celebrated with great pomp and ceremony; the King bestowing upon her a splendid dower; but before this he had taken the Prince aside, and secured a promise from him that he would never deprive the Princess of her rose, on account of her great attachment to it; and

“ so much,” said he, “ was her heart upon it, if he should insist upon her giving it up, a terrible calamity would happen to her.” The Prince thought it a slight thing that a young maiden be indulged in a foolish whim, and readily promised that she should not be crossed in her fancy ; and, all things being now in readiness, the Prince departed, with his newly-wedded Princess, and her fairy nurse, to his own dominions.

When he reached his kingdom with his bride, great crowds came out to see her, and all praised her exceeding fairness ; and the Princess Gulna’s beauty became so famous that many Princes from neighbouring States came to convince themselves of the truth of what was told, and the poets and minstrels made songs about her, and the Prince thought himself at first the happiest husband in the world.

After all this novelty was over, the Princes had returned to their own homes, and Gulna and himself were left alone together, he began to see that her eyes, instead of looking into his with loving glances, were ever cast down upon

the rose at her side—that her hand, instead of clasping his own, was lightly shielding it from harm, and contact with the rough air, or from a rude touch that might ruffle its leaves. He grew more unquiet, and his thoughts were seldom turned from the rose and the Princess, who seemed more and more to cherish it, till at last, mad with jealousy, he demanded of her that she keep it for ever from his sight, and would have torn it from her, had not the fairy interposed, and warned him of what the King had told him, that a terrible calamity would befall him if he persisted in depriving her of it; and also that his promise to the King was binding. This quieted him at first; but the thorn still rankled in his breast. The fairy now wove for the Princess a scarf of silver, which, hanging from her left shoulder, entirely concealed the rose, and, being out of his sight, the Prince for awhile forgot his cause of jealousy. One day, going into the apartments of the Princess unannounced, he found her asleep upon a couch; the zephyr stole in through the lattice, and gently stirred the silken hair that

fell around ; her long lashes lay quiet upon her transparent cheek. He paused awhile in admiration, when a stronger breath of the zephyr blew aside the scarf, and showed the rose, pressed beneath her snowy hand. Like a spark from the lightning, the fire of jealousy entered his soul. In madness he tore the rose from her side ; a red stream followed the disembedded stalk in a swift, rushing tide ; it had rooted in her heart, and the distracted Prince saw the pride of his being, the priceless Gulna, sink lifeless as the fairy entered, who shrieked forth, “ Rash Prince ! behold your work ! had you heeded my warning, your Princess would still have been yours ; but here” (and touching the rose with her wand, Azor stood before them), “ is the secret of the rose : this youth, and not thyself, was the first love of the Princess, from whom, it was long since foretold, she could not be severed, unless by *her* death. ‘Go,’ said she to Azor, ‘and be free again.’” But when the youth saw Gulna lying in her blood at his feet, his own heart burst, and, as he fell beside her, he said with his dying lips, “ Even death

shall not separate us." The generous Prince wept over the unfortunate lovers ; he caused them to be buried together, and erected a magnificent monument over them, on which was inscribed, in letters of gold, "Let all true lovers drop a tear upon the grave of Gulna and Azor."

IV.

THE BEAUTY IN THE MIST.

THERE lived far away to the westward a king and queen, who had seven daughters. Six of them were the most charming princesses in the world, but the seventh and youngest was so very plain, that her friends were ashamed of her, and kept her always out of sight. The poor thing, in comparison with her beautiful sisters, seemed almost hideous, which she really was not. However, her skin was red and very coarse, her large gray eyes were lustreless and dull, and there was no such thing as training her harsh black hair in curls, or parting it smoothly on her forehead. Kluma, for that was her name, would not have cared so much for her lack of beauty, if it had not been the cause of her sister's treating her very ill; and it really was hard that they would not even

allow her to play with them, when by themselves, or to remain in their company, because she did not look as well as they—a misfortune that was none of her fault, and which she would have been far more rejoiced than they to have remedied, if she could have done so. Her father and mother, too, were so affected by her want of beauty, in their feelings and conduct toward her, as to be cold and neglectful of *her* who never disobeyed their commands, and who was ever ready to do a kindness to them, or to the sisters, who so heartily despised her; but the king and queen were weak and silly people, who thought of little else than making a show in the world, and above all things they desired that their daughters might make splendid matches, and gain by their good looks, husbands among the wealthy princes of the neighboring states, and thus increase their own power and importance, as well as establish their children according to their liking. As Kluma grew older, she made herself friends of the inferiors in her father's palace, by being generous and forbearing toward them. The

very animals loved her, and she spent her life happily enough, when she was not in the way of her parents and sisters, who never thought of her, except as of a vexation that they could not well rid themselves of, so would try to keep her out of their minds as much as possible.

Once, as the older sisters were all at play in the park, and Kluma was hidden among the bushes, as usual, looking at them, a little old lady, very meanly dressed, came by that way. She was ill-formed, and so lame, she was forced to go upon crutches. She came hobbling along up the path, and stumbling, dropped first one crutch, then the other. One of the princesses darted forward, and caught up the crutches, which the poor old thing supposed she was going to present to her; but instead, the ill-mannered child ran off with them, and began mimicking the old lady, by limping and hobbling around, to the great amusement of the other sisters, who followed her, shrieking with laughter, over a hill, out of sight. The old woman called after them in piteous tones, but they heeded her not in the least, only mocking

her cry; when Kluma, stealing forth from her hiding-place, and coming to her, said, "Do not cry; I will find your crutches for you;" and before the old woman could speak, darted off, soon returning with the crutches in her hand, having found them just beyond the hill, where her unfeeling sister had tossed them. Kluma then assisted the old woman to rise and walk, the poor creature all the while thanking her; and when they reached the road together, and Kluma was going back, she turned and said, "Little lady, although you are not handsome, you are very good; I shall never forget your kindness to me this day, and though I now look so poor, I may yet be able to do you a great service, in return for the good you have done me. Remember."

She then went on, leaving poor Kluma half laughing at the thought of such a miserable old woman as that ever having it in her power to benefit a king's daughter. As Kluma grew older, her sisters' ill-treatment of her became more marked; they made her perform the most menial offices for them, and then

ridiculed her awkwardness and her blunders, not heeding the pains that she took to please them. One after another they were sought in marriage by grand princes, and left their father's kingdom for that of their husbands, till at last five of them had gone, and only one, the next older than Kluma, named Cerulia, the most beautiful of all, was left at home. This did not render Kluma's position any the less trying. Cerulia was the most lovely, it is true, but also the most ill-natured and exacting of the sisters, and being so much by herself, she had no other means of passing away her leisure than by plaguing and tormenting poor Kluma almost out of her life ; so that, at the last (and no wonder,) Kluma's patience was so severely tried, that she sometimes retorted in anger, and became in danger of adding a disagreeable temper to a forbidding countenance.

As the parents of Kluma had married their five eldest daughters so much to their satisfaction, and had no hope of being able to dispose of Kluma at all, they determined that their sixth and last marriageable daughter, the Prin-

cess Cerulia, as she surpassed the rest in the elegance of her person, should as far outshine them in the magnificence of her settlement. Therefore, they refused the offers made by persons of wealth and high station near home, and the father himself commissioned one of his ministers to go to a country far to the east, where dwelt an opulent king called Hayda, who had an only son, Prince Talyon, who was heir to the finest kingdom in the world, and to make proposals to the king, to the effect that his son, Prince Talyon, should wed the Princess Cerulia. He went, and returned in due time, bringing the consent of King Hayda, and wonderful accounts of his riches, and of the generosity of the young Prince.

One night, shortly after this, a fearful storm arose. The castle stood on an eminence, commanding a view of the sea, and amid the lightnings and tempest, a ship was seen tossing to and fro, till at last it was dashed in pieces on the rocks. Then the shrieks and cries of the victims were most terrible. Kluma could not endure the sight, but ran with a crowd of do-

mestics to the strand, where the dead bodies were constantly being washed on shore. Among the rest was a youth meanly clad, but of a noble form and countenance, who seemed to Kluma to show still some signs of life. She caused the men, therefore, to bear him to the castle, where they tried to restore him to consciousness. The domestics took off his wet garments, and wrapped him in warm dry flannels, and after a long time he breathed once more, and was able presently to take food, and even to walk about; but he could see nothing, a blindness having fallen upon him. The whole charge of nursing him devolved upon Kluma and her servants, for, as he was found in such mean attire, her parents thought him a person of low degree, and therefore cared little what became of him; and as they cared as little for Kluma and her occupation, she was left to spend her time with the stranger, to whom she became much attached; and as he could not see, she used to lead him about the parks and grounds for air. He seemed to be very much pleased with her, and never liked her to be away from him.

One day, while walking about, she encountered the minister who had been sent with the commission to the kingdom of Hayda. How great was his astonishment at recognizing in the poor blind youth that Kluma was leading about, the rich Prince Talyon ! He went directly and reported his discovery to the King and Queen, who were taken by surprise, and were perfectly shocked to think that he had been so neglected by all but Kluma. But they determined now to make amends. Immediately a magnificent palace was prepared for him, costly robes put upon him, and servants kept constantly in waiting. As for Kluma, she was sent out of the way, although he was ever asking for her, and supposed that she was the Princess to whom he was betrothed, not knowing that the King had another daughter. He presently confessed his rank, and that he came in disguise to see for himself his future bride. Being in the hands of a skillful physician, his sight was soon restored, and when he asked to see her who had saved his life, and who had nursed him so long and faithfully, they brought before him the

Princess Cerulia. He was charmed when he first cast his eyes upon her beauty, but when she spoke to him, the smile of joy left his lips, and he prayed of them not to deceive him; and when they still strove to convince him that it was she, he cried, "Would that I might be again blind, if her voice would have the music that it had in my past hours of darkness!"

Poor Kluma was very much grieved when she learned who the youth really was, that she had been the means of restoring to life, and though she knew of his asking for her, she never once thought of presenting herself to him, for she was sure he only needed to see her coarse features, to despise and hate her. Nevertheless she could not keep herself from thinking of him, and every day saw her sadder, and more troubled, till at last, more miserable than ever, she wandered far away from home, and sat herself down to bewail her sad lot. While she was weeping, she heard a step beside her, and a rustling, and on looking up, saw a little lady, dressed in a robe of spangled silk, all glittering with diamonds. Kluma could not at first re-

member, that she had seen her before, but she spoke and said, "Young Princess, why do you weep; have you forgotten the poor old lady to whom, years ago, you restored the crutches, that your naughty sisters willfully threw away from her? She then told you that perhaps one day it would be in her power to requite you; she has remembered it if you have not; and now tell me, for I am the same person, what you need, and why you weep so bitterly? and I, who am an enchantress of great power, can perhaps fulfill your wishes."

"Oh!" said Kluma eagerly, "can you take away this red skin, these colorless eyes, this coarse black hair, and give me instead fairness, like my sisters?"

"I fear not," said the Enchantress.

"Then," said Kluma, "all that you can do for me will be in vain; I shall yet be hated for my ugliness," and wept more bitterly than ever.

But the Enchantress was so anxious to console poor Kluma, that she kept on urging her, till Kluma finally told her everything about her sisters' ill-treatment, of the young prince

that she had saved, and of her great attachment to him, and of her grief on learning who he was; also, that she had been forbidden to see him, or to speak to him, and that if permitted, she never should dare to do so, for fear that he would scorn her.

The Enchantress mused for a while, then suddenly recollecting herself, drew from her bosom a small box, formed of diamonds, which she held up before Kluma, while she said, "I think I can dispel your grief, though I cannot change your countenance. In this box there is a mist, formed of the purest dew by morning's earliest beam; it is so light and transparent that it can scarce be seen, and yet it forms a medium of such intensity and power, the very ugliest features seen through it become softened and harmonized. But listen! only around the face and form of the most patient and amiable, can it be held; the very slightest breath of anger, or malicious passion, will blow it away, never more to return." So saying, she opened the box, and out flew a light cloud, that floated over the countenance and form of Kluma, and

the Enchantress holding up a mirror before her, revealed to her her face, shining resplendent through the diamond fleece. She saw the mild light beaming from her eyes, the lips around which played a heavenly smile, and the hair, meekly parted from the brow, "pure as an angel's." Kluma was almost transported, and turned to thank the Enchantress, for so long remembering, and so generously rewarding, a simple act of kindness. The little lady smiled on her, and said, "Go back to your home, but do not forget the conditions on which you keep your charms. Be patient and obedient, and all will yet prosper with you." And before Kluma could thank her again, she vanished.

Kluma reached her home at night, where she was told that her parents had given their commands that she should remain constantly in her room, and never expose herself to the risk of being seen by the Prince, who was as yet ignorant of her assistance. This was sad news to poor Kluma, and she began to despair of ever seeing the Prince again, as now matters were in progress for the marriage, which was soon

to be celebrated between her sister and the prince, and they would probably depart ere she would be released. But she made no resistance, only followed the attendant who was instructed to lead her to imprisonment. As she passed through the hall, the servants were struck with wonder at the amazing change which had taken place in Kluma, and that she had become the most beautiful of the princesses. Day by day, as they attended her, they became accustomed to the change, and spoke of her among themselves, as if she had always been, as now, pre-eminent.

All this long time, for a month at least, Kluma had not seen her parents and sister (who only wished her to keep out of sight, and beyond this, cared very little what became of her), nor even had she caught a passing glimpse of the Prince, from whom they concealed all knowledge of her existence. The pains they took to accomplish their wishes, in this respect, was the very cause of bringing Kluma to his notice. One of the servants, in waiting on him, who, like all the rest, was attached to Kluma,

and indignant at her being deprived of her liberty, let fall some hints one day that awakened the curiosity of the Prince, about the beautiful daughter of the King, who was confined in the palace, and, being urged, told the whole story of her wrongs, that it was Kluma and not Cerulia who had saved his life, and whose voice he so loved to hear. The Prince, enraged at the deceit that had been practised upon him, immediately sent for the King and Queen, and demanded that they should produce their other daughter, who was a prisoner in the palace, or he would leave their kingdom at once, and return home alone. They were very much alarmed, and tried to appease his wrath, by making a confession of the fraud that they had practised on him, but represented that it was on account of the perfect hideousness of Kluma, and that she was not even fit to be presented to him; but, as they had already deceived him, and the servant had expatiated largely on her great attractions, he persisted in his desire to see her. The Princess Cerulia, in a rage at the implied slight to herself, and

thinking to mortify the Prince and Kluma at the same time, proposed that she should be sent for, and the King, thinking it the best mode of ending this importunity of the Prince, and of convincing him of the truth, consented to its being done. She was accordingly conducted, trembling and agitated, into their presence. The Princess Cerulia haughtily and triumphantly turned her eyes, first upon the Prince, then upon Kluma, when lo ! she stood glowing before them, in unsurpassed loveliness. The King and Queen were no less amazed, not knowing how this wonderful change had been wrought. As for the Prince, he needed no second look to know that to this Princess his heart should be given. He thanked her for his life, which she had saved to him, and when she answered he knew the voice he had so longed to hear again. The King, seeing that there was still a hope of his claiming the Prince for his son-in-law, came forward, and tendered the hand of Kluma, which the Prince graciously accepted, as by this time he was completely captivated.

Words cannot describe the rage of the Princess Cerulia when she saw Kluma thus openly preferred to herself, and her mortification knew no bounds, when, after an imposing pageant, and bridal ceremony (at which she was forced to appear as chief bridesmaid), she saw Kluma depart, as the bride of the Prince Talyon, to the kingdom of his father, to which he was heir, and where they lived in happiness many long years ; and Kluma still grew more lovely in the eyes of her husband, for the mist was never dissipated as long as she lived, by the rude breath of anger or malice.

V.

THE RICH PERSIAN AND THE STATUE.

THERE was once a rich Persian, named Bolamah, whose father had left him in possession of such vast amounts of treasure that he exceeded even the greatest Princes of the country in wealth. Bolamah had a splendid palace, full of all that could delight the senses, and furnish food for the mind ; such statuary and rich paintings was never before seen ; such magnificent gardens, grottoes and fountains ; beside this, he was exceedingly handsome in person and accomplished in mind and manners. Of course, he was surrounded by flatterers, who paid court to him, because, in return, he heaped benefits upon them, and, so accustomed was he to praise, that insensibly it became necessary to his happiness, and those who were most fulsome in their adulation were the surest of gaining his favor.

He had, however, one true friend, who esteemed Bolamah next to himself; and if any make profession of greater friendship than that, we ought to suspect their sincerity. This friend, called Covez, was poor but honest, and much attached to Bolamah, who was fond of him also. For a long time after his father's death, Bolamah found plenty of employment in perfecting and adorning his palace, and Covez was always appointed to oversee the execution of the plans that the fine taste of his patron suggested. By their joint efforts the palace of Bolamah was so noted for its elegance that many came from afar to see it, and were enchanted, and did homage to the fortunate owner, who was the proudest of men. When he reached his thirtieth year he felt that his happiness would be more complete if he had a wife, to be with him constantly, and to share the grandeur and luxury that surrounded him. He opened, as usual, his mind to Covez, and promised to bestow on him a magnificent reward, if he would procure him a suitable companion. Covez readily enough accepted the

commission, first revolving in his mind what sort of woman would be most likely to please Bolamah. In regard to her beauty, that matter was settled at once—it was indispensable ; and in Persia, where the women have a world-wide reputation for personal attractions, it was no hard matter to find plenty which would charm the eye. “But,” thought he, “Bolahmah, who is so learned and accomplished himself, will require that his wife also, in the same manner, excel all others ; and to find beauty and talent combined would be a difficult task.” Nevertheless, he determined to undertake it, and gain the reward if he was able, for Covez was in love, and would have asked no one to choose a wife for him while pretty little black-eyed Manilla lived with her old father, by the side of the same river that passed through the splendid grounds of Bolamah, yet did not disdain to make its gladdest music in rushing by their little cot, that stood in the humblest vale.

Covez knew if he could gain the reward that Bolamah offered it would make him rich as he desired for the rest of his life ; he could then

marry his little Manilla, and make sure that she was his own; and he felt that he could never rest easy till this was done, for she was beset by all the neighboring swains; and, though she had given him her troth, he could not help feeling anxious and uneasy when others, richer than himself, were pressing their suits with such ardor. Covez, therefore, sought earnestly to find out some woman to present to Bolamah, and one fine morning, setting out on a journey, he resolved not to come back till he had accomplished his object. After having been gone for a long time, and hearing of many whom he thought would be likely to please, but, on searching them out, finding himself always disappointed, he one day heard of a very beautiful woman, of whose voice such wonders were told that he determined to hear her for himself; accordingly he travelled to the place where this singing bird (whose name was Natinga), resided. He found her with a crowd about her, who were listening breathlessly while she poured forth from her swelling throat such a melody that poor Covez sat down overpowered

and listened, forgetting for the time his errand, Bolamah, Manilla, everything, so completely was his soul ravished from him. When she had ceased he recovered himself enough to perceive that she was as finely formed and handsome a woman as one could wish to see, and he felt sure, if Bolamah could only hear her sing, he would marry her at once, and thus have her where he could always be listening to the music of her voice.

He found no great trouble in persuading Natinga to go with him. She was poor, and, like her sex, fond of luxury and splendor, and Cobeze had not been behindhand in picturing the brilliant future that lay before her, if she would leave her home and follow him. She bade adieu to her parents and friends, and set off with Cobeze, but in parting felt sorrowful enough, as she remembered how proud they all had been of her; but when, after three days, she came in sight of a stately palace, and Cobeze told her that, in all probability, it would be her future home, she banished her regrets, and bore herself through the gateway, on her camel,

with as proud an air as a queen about to receive the homage of her subjects. Bolamah met them at the door, and conducted them to the apartments that he had appropriated to the use of his future wife. "Here," thought Natinga, "one can but be happy." And no wonder she thought so, for everything a woman could fancy or desire was there ; the softest carpets, in which the feet sank as into mossy turf ; couches of velvet and down ; fountains, with gay birds dipping their tiny beaks into the spray ; flowers, whose odors almost palled on the senses by their richness. Poor Natinga was at first bewildered, and Cobeze feared she would not be collected enough to do her best before Bolamah at night, which he had appointed as the time when he should first listen to her music. But at evening, seated on a balcony overlooking a scene of beauty, made visible by the moonlight, she was so excited and inspired that she poured forth, as if from her very soul, such notes as Cobeze had never heard from her before. Bolamah, completely ravished, declared passionately that this was

the woman of all others to be his chosen companion ; and the hearts of the three that evening were full of joy : Bolamah, at having such a lovely and accomplished being for his bride, Natinga, with her new-found splendor, and Cobeze, that he had gained the reward that was to do so much for him. Bolamah was so proud of Natinga and her genius that he sent invitations to all the wealthy gentlemen of distinction, with their families, to come to a great feast that he was preparing, and which was to last for a whole month, and terminate with his marriage. He caused a sort of throne to be erected for himself and Natinga at the end of a splendid hall, or court, where, with a harp of gold in her hand, she performed and sang before the assembly, who were in raptures. Their applause at first pleased Bolamah, but he soon found that he was cast into the shade by the superiority of Natinga ; that when he took the harp his own performance did not please even himself, and only called forth such meager applause as the politeness of his guests forced from them. And, day by day, as they became more

charmed with Natinga's music, and poured forth the flattery at her shrine that he had been wont to receive himself, he grew more disquieted, and laid the consequences of his own vanity to the account of poor Natinga. He began to fancy that her music was harsh and discordant, that it grated upon his ear, and he grew sullen and ill-humored towards her, while she, poor thing, never imagining the cause of his unhappiness, went on trying to please him by even outdoing herself, which, of course, only rendered her the more odious to him.

At last his distaste became so evident that Cobeze perceived something was wrong, and shortly after, Bolamah told him that he must take her out of his sight, and endeavor to procure for him a wife whose tastes should better accord with his own. Cobeze was very sorry to hear this, indeed much more grieved than Natinga herself, when she came to be told of it, for her life had latterly been made so unpleasant, by Bolamah's harshness, she was only too glad to be permitted to go back again to the kind friends who had been so proud of her, more

especially so, as Bolamah in his anxiety to get rid of her, had to make amends to her for her disappointment, by loading her with valuable presents, and graciously bidding her farewell.

Cobez conducted her again to her native place, where the whole town, when they heard that she was returning to them, came out to receive her, and carried her triumphantly to her own little home—to her parents, where her song was soon heard “ringing up the sky,” as would a wild bird’s, who had been confined in a golden cage, when it felt itself free, and again in the little nest of its infancy.

While Cobez was rather sadly returning, leading the gaily housed animal which had borne Natinga to her home, all his fine schemes having fallen to the ground by this sudden change in the mind of Bolamah, he saw before him a company of ladies and gentlemen to whom he wished to join himself, as the road was infested with robbers, who were apt to molest single travellers; he rode up, and asked to go along with them, to which they gladly gave their consent. He found that they were

going to look at some paintings in a town not far off, which were said to be the most beautiful in the world. Cobeze resolved to go with them, and secure the choicest for Bolamah's palace. They entered a gallery where they were on exhibition, and Cobeze felt sure that they surpassed anything that he had ever seen, although he had made a collection in the palace of all that were the most celebrated; and on asking to see the artist, he was very much astonished when a female presented herself, a lovely woman, with a pure Grecian face and form, mild brown eyes and hair, whose smooth braids were folded classically around her forehead. Krayona had a gentleness of manner, that indicated a pliable disposition. Cobeze instantly said to himself, What if I should induce this lady to accompany me home; Bolamah, who paints so well himself, would surely enjoy having his wife in possession of the same talent. Dear me, were I like Bolamah, able to marry, I should not be so long in making a choice; but such a poor ignorant thing as Manilla would not suit Bolamah. She cannot sing or paint, or do any-

thing clever, but her laugh is music enough for me, and her little fingers twirl the thread she spins so prettily, and her small feet go dancing along with such a graceful lightness, that she is more charming to me than the most accomplished lady in the land. But if I do not succeed in getting the reward, what will all her prettiness avail me; I shall be too poor to marry her; so at a venture I will take Krayona, and see if she will not please Bolamah better than Natinga has done. Krayona did not refuse the honor of becoming a candidate, as the wife of the wealthiest gentleman in Persia, when Cobeze represented to her that he was in favor of her accompanying him. So one morning saw her on the camel, that had borne Natinga in a contrary direction, and with her choicest paintings in a caravan behind, journeying over a delightful country, toward the palace of Bolamah. They reached it as sunset was gilding its walls with its gorgeous floods of light. They entered the palace quietly, and Krayona, without being announced, was conducted by Cobeze to his own apartments, and

the next day, when he and Bolamah were alone together, he told him of Krayona, and caused the finest of her works to be shown to him, which Bolamah so admired that he greatly desired to see the artist. Her modest address and mild beauty so charmed him, that he directly desired that she should be made mistress of the apartments that Natinga had formerly occupied, and have free access to his galleries of painting and statuary, to gratify her favorite tastes. She was almost beside herself in the midst of these works of art, and with Bolamah, spent most of her time there, copying from the old masters, or out amid the beautiful works of nature, sketching beside him. Now, Cobeze thought his patron would be satisfied, and all would go well again; but he found that it was not so. Bolamah had caused Krayona's paintings to be hung beside his own, and on first seeing them together, was excessively mortified, to behold what a sorry appearance his own made beside them; and when he saw that all eyes, after glancing at his, instantly returned to those of Krayona, he began to be as jealous of her as he before had been

of Natinga, and to wish her as heartily out of his sight. Krayona was too much occupied with her art to notice the change in Bolamah; but Cobeze, who watched him closely, soon detected it, and made up his mind that as Bolamah was so fickle, it would be almost impossible to fix him in his choice, and he felt no surprise when Bolamah instructed him to make presents to Krayona, as he had done to Natinga, and convey her away in the same manner. All which he did; and Krayona, without a word of complaint, left her grandeur, and returned to her former station, happy and contented.

Now about this time, travelers from the eastern part of Persia came through the country where Bolamah dwelt, and gave their testimony to the genius of a bright star in poetry that had arisen in that land; her fame was so noised abroad as to rivet the ears of Cobeze and Bolamah, who, from time to time conversed upon the various reports of her that came to them, and at last, so much was he interested, Cobeze was directed to find her out, and if possible, to

bring her to the palace. After much seeking, he obtained an entrance into her presence, where she was surrounded with auditors, before whom she was reciting her stanzas. He thought her a glorious creature, with her black hair streaming wildly, and her eyes of fire, her low broad brow, and cheek pale, excepting as it was lit by the flash of genius. She needed the most glowing descriptions from Cobez of Bolamah's riches and power, to induce her to consent to go with him; but he succeeded at last; and after a journey, the most trying to Cobez, they came to a point where a cavalcade, sent out by Bolamah, to welcome his chosen bride to her home, was waiting to meet them. Bolamah himself came many miles in state, to receive one so distinguished, and they conducted her with ceremony into the palace, where everything had been put in order to welcome her. It took her several days to recover the fatigues of her journey, and all the while Bolamah was waiting impatiently to converse with her, and to hear her poetry. At last she gave out that she would meet him with his friends

in the great hall, and recite to him her poetry. In the evening she was inducted into the seat that Natinga had occupied, when she sang before them, and with Bolamah beside her, she commenced a wild rhapsody, then swelling to a lofty strain, she told of the battle raging high, till the warriors would place their hands upon their swords, and breathe forth fire; then her voice and words would soothe, till they sank back and listened, while she poured a tale of love; then she would melt them to tears with her pathetic lay, till they hushed their very breaths to hear her. Bolamah was at first carried along with the tide, and praised and admired as well as others; but the next day, alone with Hersala, when he commenced repeating to her some of his own poetry, he found first that she was yawning wearily, and then, that she was fast asleep. He discovered, too, that one who had been so constantly flattered as Hersala, like himself, needed the excitement of praise, and that after these fits of inspiration, she was more than usually dull; that her temper was not as mild as that of Na-

tinga, or Krayona, and that the wild passion she expressed, sometimes moved her own bosom to a storm.

If he had been jealous of Natinga and Krayona, he might well be of Hersala, for she so wrought upon the minds of all, the very scullions in the kitchen were repeating her words or singing her songs; and so greatly was she adored, that a crowd followed her footsteps, and Bolamah, of so much importance before, sank into insignificance beside her. He became at last so mad with jealousy, that he dismissed her suddenly, and she, in a rage at his treatment, wrote verses on Bolamah, and placed his foibles in such a ludicrous light, that he was so mortified at the time as to declare he would no more allow a female to become a candidate for the honor of being his wife, and that he would remain unmarried to the end of his days.

Cobez, who had been near getting into disgrace himself by his repeated failures, began now to have an inkling of the true state of the case. He now understood that Bolamah would not be satisfied with a wife who was constantly

casting him, her lord, into the shade by her superiority; that a companion, to please him, must be content to be his humble admirer, and that, if he ever obtained the reward, it must be by the greatest caution and skillfulness on his own part. Now Cobeze had an intimate friend called Meldon, a cunning sculptor, who carried his art to the highest degree of perfection. In his perplexity to Meldon Cobeze went, and told him all about Bolamah, and of his unsuccessful attempts to satisfy him, and of his own desire to make Menilla his wife, and then promised him half the reward, if he would devise and assist him in carrying out some plan to fulfill his wishes. This Meldon consented to do, and on putting their heads together, concocted a scheme so much to their satisfaction that they proceeded at once to execute it. Meldon set himself to work, and made the perfect image of a woman; it was tall, and of the most symmetrical proportions. He moulded the features so perfectly, they had the form and the very expression of life; the eyes were of the darkest hazel, soft and varying in their light; the hair,

silken, glossy, and black as the wing of a raven, fell over shoulders of marble whiteness, round and polished; her bosom was made to rise and fall with the breath that he breathed from his own lips into hers; her arms dazzled one to look upon them, and the taper fingers of the slender hand were taught to move gracefully over the strings of a harp; her brows were black, and arched like a bow, her lashes long and dark. It could move its limbs, and walk about with grace and dignity, unclothe the lips, smile sweetly, and softly murmur, "Beautiful! Beautiful!" When it was completed, they arrayed it in queenly robes. When Cobeze saw it finished, he was so delighted with the beautiful image, he was tempted to forget Menilla forever, and throw himself at its feet; but he presently thought of the little warm heart that was beating beneath her bosom, and felt that she was ten times dearer to him than this stately, cold beauty. They gave the image the name of Fauna, and set to work to plan how to bring her to the notice of Bolamah. So they contrived at last that Cobeze should

represent to him that a great lady had come from far to view his splendid palace; and having obtained Bolamah's consent to its being exhibited to her by them, they timed their visit so well as to meet Bolamah at the door as they were alighting from their chariot. Bolamah, who had so long been distinguished for his high breeding, could not allow such a magnificent lady, like a queen in her mien and dress, to pass him without the ordinary expressions of politeness. He therefore returned her graceful salutation, and gave her his arm, and with a step as calm and measured as her own, traversed with her the walks and apartments of the grounds and of the palace. Everything met her approbation. Did he show her his gardens, his paintings, or take up his lute and sing, still the sweet smile hovered around her mouth, and the words, "Beautiful! Beautiful!" were murmured from her lips, till at last Bolamah, who could no longer resist her beauty, her grace, and, above all, her appreciation of himself, fell at her feet, telling her that she of all should be the chosen one who was to share

his palace and his heart; and Fauna only drooped her proud head a little lower, and still murmured softly, "Beautiful! Beautiful!" till Bolamah was quite overcome with her dignity and sweet compliance to his wishes. Cobeze was in transports when he found his plan had worked so admirably. Fauna was now the constant and approved companion of Bolamah; he never was willing to have her away from him a moment, and preparations for the marriage were put forward with haste, to the great joy of Cobeze, who was convinced that Bolamah was now in earnest. At last all was in readiness, and the marriage took place, at which Fauna comported herself with such dignity as to win the approbation of Bolamah and the admiration of all that looked upon her; and when she was installed as mistress of the palace, her bearing toward the guests was so queenly, yet condescending, that even the ladies, who are apt to be jealous of their own sex, declared her the most fascinating woman in the universe.

So pleased was Bolamah with Fauna, that he doubled the reward that he had offered to Cobeze,

because he had been the means of bringing to his notice one who was so charming, and of procuring him so much happiness. This money Cobeze divided with his friend Meldon, through whose skill he had been able to obtain it, and with part of their money they purchased two cottages; and when Cobeze had married Menilla, and had a family about him, Meldon was godfather to his children, and his favorite, called after him, bade fair to equal him in skill in the art which Meldon loved.

Cobeze and Menilla lived very happily together—(not quite as calmly, perhaps, as Bolamah and his spouse, whose domestic peace was a proverb in the country); but when Menilla was a little capricious and wayward, Cobeze only said to Meldon, “There, she shows her flesh and blood, and her warm heart,” and he never thought of envying Bolamah and Fauna in the unvarying calmness of their life.

VI.

THE ROSE AND THE LILY.

AMID a garden of flowers the queen Rose and the queen Lily stood pre-eminent ; but they, like all beauties, were extremely jealous of each other, and were not willing to divide the palm between them, but each one was anxious to be acknowledged as the “flower of the flowers.” Knowing the foibles of the two rival ladies, an old orange-tree sought to ingratiate himself into the favor of both by alternately flattering them in private, and laughing at the ridiculous pretensions of the one to the other, whispering to each that her charms could not be surpassed ; and then the false old fellow used to entertain his friend, the oleander, who was not a lady’s man at all, with stories of the vanity of the two queens, and of the lucky strokes of flattery which had told so well on his susceptible

listeners. But he soon found that his sincerity was going to be put to the test, for these partisans could no longer conceal their rivalry ; so the Rose openly threw down the gauntlet to the Lily, and called upon all the flowers of the garden to pronounce upon their respective merits, and to decide which should henceforward take the lead among them. The old orange-tree was chosen by the consent of both the queens to be the chief judge, each of them thinking that the umpire was enlisted in her favor, and thereby that they had the game in their own hands. Now, the old gallant did not wish to have anything to say in the matter, but, as they were both so solicitous, he could not refuse them with a very good grace ; and, to put on the best face, he invited all the flowers of the garden to an entertainment, at which he gave out that the question was to be put for ever at rest.

When the queen Lily received her invitation she said to one of her fair maidens, "The presumption of that flaunting Rose deserves its punishment, and, were it not that she would be

vain enough to suppose that I am afraid to show myself beside her, I would decline meeting her altogether; but she would feed her vanity upon my refusal, therefore I shall give my orders to all the family to adorn themselves, and be in readiness to attend me to-morrow at midnight."

The orange-tree spared neither labor nor expense in the preparations. A table was set out in a large arbor in the midst of the garden, with refreshments, and the walks were brilliantly illuminated by lamps which the glow-worms and the fire-flies furnished. A fine orchestra of birds was stationed on the top of the arbor, and long before midnight all were in readiness, and the orange-tree was awaiting, with the oleander beside him (who, by the way, had enjoyed a quiet pipe or two), the arrival of the guests. Many of the flowers came early, but the orchestra only struck up when the queen Rose approached; she was received with distinguished attention by the orange-tree, who presented her to the oleander. The ill-mannered old bachelor, instead of rising and lead-

ing her to a chair, merely nodded his head, and remained stiffly seated, much to the mortification of the orange-tree, whose own manners were polished, and very deferential to ladies, though I have no doubt that the oleander cared far more for them in his heart than the courtly, but rather deceptive, orange-tree.

The queen was dressed in her diamonds, and no one could blame her for the pride with which she looked around upon her attendants, who, blooming with youth and beauty, were filling the seats. There was the white rose (always a favorite), with her modest and unpretending manners ; the damask, with her beautiful blush ; and even the wild rose was there, and, as the queen observed to one of her intimates, " Though she had been brought up in the country, and not at all accustomed to fashionable society, there was a native grace about her, and a propriety of manner, which made her very presentable, owing, no doubt, to the good blood she had in her veins." The queen was very gracious to all, and only once did she seem at all disturbed, and that was

when the little prude, the moss-rose, passed her, making such a show of her modesty, in pretending to hide her face under her veil, when she knew well enough she was only enhancing her charms by so doing ; and presently, when the little beauty stole shyly into a corner, as if to get out of sight, every one said she was striving to captivate Monsieur de Yellow Rose, a gentleman who had travelled in foreign parts, and was by all odds the most desirable beau in the room. Her artifice must have succeeded, for they presently commenced a flirtation with each other that lasted the whole evening. Now a second flourish of trumpets by the orchestra heralded the approach of the Lilies, and at the sound there was quite a sensation among the Roses, who all shook up their perfumes, and seemed not a little fluttered. As for the queen Rose, she was quite agitated, and her color heightened as the queen Lily, with a splendid train, swept in with such a calm and undisturbed dignity. First after the queen came the water-lily, who wore a crown of gold on her head, and had sailed down from her home in

her gondola. When the queen Rose caught sight of her she whispered, "What a shame it was for the Lily to make pretension that the water-lily was related to her family, when every one knew well enough there was no foundation for it, excepting the mere accident of their having the same family name." But her indignation went far beyond this when she saw the fleur-de-lis among the rest, and she cried, "This is unbearable; he is of a French family, not in any wise connected with her, who, I do not doubt, she urged so strongly to attend her that, with the good breeding and politeness for which his nation is so celebrated, he could not refuse.

She now caught sight of the lily of the valley, and exclaimed, "So, so, my Lady Lily condescends at last to take notice of her humble little cousin, who has lived for years in retirement, and who, no doubt, would have remained there still had not some flowers of distinction noticed her, and brought her forward. I *was* in hopes that the little thing would have had spirit enough to reject the advances made to her at such a late hour." Notwithstanding

her affecting to despise the pretensions of the Lily, the Rose was not at all at her ease; she felt that as the Lily sailed around the circle, with her graceful air, she was a rival to be feared, and was not so sanguine of gaining the victory as she had been. She saw that the placid mien of the queen Lily had not been without its effect in calling forth the admiration of those present; might they not even be led to overlook the beauty which she felt conscious far exceeded the Lily's, by that lady's self-possession and imposing carriage. At any rate, the Rose felt uneasy, and was quite nervous, and began rather to repent of her rashness in thus entering into the lists without first measuring the resources of her adversary.

But she need not have been so alarmed; the orange-tree knew too well what he was about to risk his standing with either of the ladies by siding with the other, so, after walking about among the company, and holding consultation with one and another, he at last gave the signal for the guests to gather round the table, and partake of the delicacies that were

set before them. After their glasses had been filled he raised his voice, and proposed as a toast—"The Queen Rose and the Queen Lily;" and when they had drunk and lowered their glasses, he bowed to the rivals, and addressed them thus :—

"Ladies, when you compare one with the other you both do yourselves injustice. The charm of the Rose is her bloom and warmth—that of the Lily her exceeding fairness; both of you are pieces of perfection, but of different casts. Should you, Madam (addressing the Rose), attempt to attain the whiteness of the Lily, you would only succeed in dimming your natural brightness; and you (to the Lily), in striving to gain the glow of the Rose, would only mar your purity without reaching your desire. Be, therefore, content to shine resplendent each in the way that nature has marked out for you, and be not envious or displeased that another excels in a different way. Learn also that the Rose suffers nothing by a display of the perfection of the Lily, nor the Lily by being brought into comparison with the Rose,

for the beauty of each will be only enhanced by the contrast."

The oleander and the other flowers all concurred in the sentiments expressed by the old orange-tree ; and the ladies themselves, though at first they were both a little angry, and inclined to accuse the orange-tree with treachery, after a few moments' consideration, acknowledged the justice of the remarks just made, and the Rose came forward in a very frank manner and gave her hand to the Lily, who, on her part, received the concession with a graceful friendliness. After they had partaken of the delicacies, they left the table arm in arm, and thus promenaded for some time before the admiring gaze of the assembly ; their attendants followed their example, and the Roses and Lilies, commingling instead of standing coldly apart, gave such a variety and animation to the scene that all declared there never had been so brilliant a fete in the garden as this. The oleander was so inspired by the scene that he quite melted from his apathetic state, and danced and laughed with the best, and invited

the company, before they separated, to a banquet that he would prepare them the following week, and even engaged the orchestra in attendance to be present.

All parted with the greatest kindness and good feeling, and the amity thus commenced continued through their lives, and resulted in the mutual advantage of the queen Rose and the queen Lily.

VII.

THE GOLDEN CLOAK.

THERE once lived a King, who had reigned for many years over his kingdom, and with his Queen was idolized by his subjects. Only one thing was wanting to make his happiness complete. This was the want of an heir to his crown; and when, after a long period had elapsed, contrary to all expectations, a son was born to him, you may be sure there was great rejoicing throughout the land.

In that country, as in many others, it was the custom for all the male children born on the same day with the heir-apparent to the crown to be brought up with him, and devoted to his service. They were educated at the expense of the State, and the parents thought themselves indeed fortunate in having their children so magnificently provided for without

exertion on their own part. Amid these youths Prince Anjah, who in reality was a paragon of beauty, stood pre-eminent. They were all fine looking and noble boys, excepting one, the dwarfish Balzebar, who was ugly in countenance and deformed in person, and of so weak an intellect that he was almost an idiot. *He was, beside this, both deaf and dumb.* The King was going to reject this poor little mischance at first, but the Queen, who was a wise and benevolent woman, represented to her husband that this misfortune, in being incapable of providing for himself, gave him a more especial claim on the protection of his sovereign, and besides that, as everything, however humble and despised, had its use, this unfortunate child might perhaps be destined to exert some powerful influence on the fortunes of their son. Her words made such an impression on the King's mind, he consented to receive Balzebar with the rest, to the great joy of his parents, who would not otherwise have known what to do with him.

As the children grew older, Anjah, who was of a most generous and noble disposition, took

Balzebar under his own particular care and guardianship, and thus prevented poor Balzebar from being harassed as he would have been by the ridicule of his more unthinking companions, who delighted in tormenting the poor soul, and in playing their tricks upon him. Balzebar in return became so attached to Prince Anjah, that he followed him about everywhere, as a dog might have done his master who was kind to him, and was never contented away from him. It was a curious sight to see the tall and finely-formed Anjah followed everywhere by this little stunted and ugly dwarf.

When the Prince had reached his eighteenth year, in accordance with the custom of that time, he was sent to a foreign country, where learning and the arts were in an advanced state, to be educated. All the young men, his followers, accompanied him, even Balzebar; for though the King and his ministers had at first decided that he should remain at home, fearing that the constant appearance of such an inferior personage in his train might be prejudicial to the dignity of the young Prince,

yet, at the earnest solicitation of Anjah (who knew that the faithful creature would grieve himself to death if he should forsake him), he was permitted to depart with them. A fine vessel had been put in order for their use, and with a band of music the Prince and his retinue were escorted to the place where it was in waiting. Great crowds were collected on the shore, and the loud huzzas of the populace drowned the swelling notes of the trumpet as their Prince, with his white plumes floating to the wind, stepped on board the ship; but they could scarcely restrain a yell of contempt and derisive laughter as the little hump-backed mute followed after him up the plank with the agility of a monkey. Two and two the others embarked, and the young men stood on the upper deck together as the vessel moved off, and waved their adieus, till at last the helmet with the snowy plumes, which was the distinguishing mark of the Prince, could no longer be seen.

Anjah felt grieved at parting with his parents, and as his father was quite an old man,

he thought it very probable that he should never see him again, for he was to remain five long years away from home ; and the tears, in spite of his efforts, started forth as he saw the King watching the receding vessel, and knew what a pang his heart was suffering in thus separating from his child, the pride of his old age. But when distance shut from his sight the land and all familiar objects, the world seemed as it were opening before him, full of bright promise ; he forgot his sorrow, and as the bark bounded lightly over the billows, his heart danced within him, buoyant with hope and pleasure. After a short and prosperous voyage, they came in view of the beautiful land which was their destination. They were received by the King of the country with distinguished honor, befitting their rank and importance. This King was reputed to be as wise as Solomon, and had collected to his court all the learned men of the world ; and hither were sent the youth of high rank from all nations, to learn wisdom of these sages. But their parents would have done well to have

kept them at home out of harm's way, for the high-spirited young men who flocked to this Temple of Minerva thought their own wisdom far superior to that of the sages, and held all their acquirements in very light esteem; and if they learned anything at all, it was the knowledge which experience gives, which, to be sure, is the very best sort of lore, but which they might have acquired just as perfectly anywhere else.

Anjah had not been long there before he became initiated into the secret that Merea, the King's daughter, was the most beautiful Princess in the world, and he pondered much more deeply on this fact than on the philosophy of the schools, and he strove with much greater assiduity to be the successful candidate for her heart and hand than for the prizes offered to the victorious scholar, or the laurel wreath of the poet. As he was far handsomer than all her other suitors, he had very little difficulty in gaining the young maiden's particular and approving notice. His agreeable manners became a certain passport to her favor, and she so hon-

ored him above the rest, that Anjah, conscious of victory, assumed rather a high and triumphant air among those who were, like himself, captivated with the King's charming daughter. He spent all his leisure time in her company, and did not rest easy till he had obtained her father's permission to address his daughter, which he found little difficulty in gaining, for the King "as wise as Solomon," saw very plainly that no more noble son-in-law would ever be likely to present himself. After Anjah had conversed with Merea, and found the maiden already won, he sent to seek his father's consent to his betrothal to her, as the fame of her excellence and beauty had reached him. The King, his father, could think of no more suitable consort for his son than a Princess so charming and of such a high rank, so, sending his approval and blessing to his son, Anjah and Merea were publicly betrothed. Then, and not till then, Anjah applied himself sedulously to the study of the sciences which should fit him for governing a kingdom, and filling with dignity the exalted station to which Providence had destined him.

Three years passed away, and Anjah's improvement in mind did honor to his teachers, and to his own perseverance and capacity; two years more, and the allotted time of his exile, (which owing to the society of Merea, had been anything but irksome,) would be fulfilled, and he was looking forward to the time when he should return with his bride to his native land, when a hasty summons came, commanding him to speed his departure, as his father was lying at the point of death, and longed once more to see his son alive. Anjah delayed not a moment to obey the call, though his heart was full of conflicting emotions—sorrow at being obliged to leave his betrothed, mingled with anxiety to see his father once more; and bidding adieu to the many friends that his kindness and affability had won, he went with his followers down to the vessel, which had been sent to convey him home, accompanied by the King, the Princess Merea, and all their retinue. The King, in bidding him farewell, pronounced a blessing, and conferred on him many valuable presents as marks

of his favor ; but the Princess, when she parted with him, gave him only one keepsake, but that was of surpassing richness ; it was a cloak of beaten gold, curiously wrought, of the purest metal, so elastic and pliable that it fell like a mantle over his shoulders ; she clasped it with her own hands about his neck, and then by signs bade Balzebar, who stood beside them, to make it his especial care, so that Anjah should not lose or be robbed of it.

In the time of their sojourn in this country, Balzebar had attached himself more than ever to Anjah ; and Merea, who had petted him, on account of his attachment to the Prince, was looked upon by the dwarf as almost as great a paragon as his master,—indeed, an angel of goodness. She became so associated in his mind with the Prince Anjah, that he was ever eager to do her bidding, and promised to take care of the cloak, and suffer no one to take it away ; then giving Prince Anjah her last adieu, Merea departed with her father. Anjah assuring her that he would return as speedily as possible, and make her his wife. When the

vessel was out at sea, Anjah and his companions remained on deck, pacing up and down, or looking pensively at the receding shore, thinking of the kind and fair ones that they had left behind, and wishing themselves back again, all but the poor mute, Balzebar, who sat watching Anjah, with his cloak glittering in the sun, and the white plumes of the golden helmet, which he always wore, fluttering in the breeze. His dull eyes were half dazzled by the light which was reflected on this shining mantle, and he opened and shut them as if basking in the radiance. When night came, and the Prince had divested himself of his golden helmet, with the white plumes, and the golden cloak, Balzebar put them carefully away, in a box which had been prepared for the purpose, and then placing it under his head, for a pillow, slept, as he always did, like a great dog at the feet of Prince Anjah.

About midnight, they were awakened by a terrible noise; it was thunder, mingling with the roaring of the sea. While they had been sleeping, a most terrific storm had arisen, and

bidding Balzebar follow him, Anjah rushed on deck. The elements were in a perfect fury, the ship was tossed wildly about on the summit of the waves, and seemed as if going to pieces with the strain. Just then there came the cry that the vessel had sprung a leak, and a boat was hastily let down, into which the Prince and his companions were hurried. Beside the Prince on deck, gazing on all with wonder and dismay, Balzebar had stood, till seeing Anjah descend into the boat, and beckon to himself, he disappeared. Vainly they called him; he could not hear their cries nor answer them. Fearful for their own safety, none of the crew would venture in search of him, and being all in the boat, they pushed off lest they might be swamped beneath the vessel, and were far away before Anjah discovered that Balzebar was not among them. To return for him was beyond all human power. When morning light appeared, the storm had calmed, yet no trace of the vessel could be seen. So they concluded that the ship had sunk, and that poor Balzebar had made his grave ere now in the ocean's depths.

With great exertions, they managed to bend the course of the boat in the same direction whence they came, and after almost incredible toils and dangers, were driven by the wind so near the shore, as to be picked up by a vessel bound for the port, and carried safely to land, where they were welcomed by the King and the Princess Merea, and with as great rejoicing as if they had been restored again from the dead. And now Anjah and Merea seemed doubly dear to each other, and she mourned with him over the supposed fate of the poor harmless and faithful Balzebar. But let us leave the Prince in the kind keeping of the King and Princess, while we see what was in reality become of the lost Balzebar.

When the Prince descended into the boat, and made signs to Balzebar to follow him, the first impulse of the dwarf was to obey his master; but, remembering the box which contained the royal helmet, and the golden cloak, he ran below to secure it. It took him a long time to find his way to the berth, on account of the darkness and the motion of the vessel, and when

at last he reached the deck, the boat had gone far away, out of his sight. Not knowing what to do, he sat down in his despair, and fearing every moment that he should be washed overboard by the waves, made preparations to lash himself on to the masts; but ere he did this, to prevent the loss of that, which to his poor, weak mind, was of far more importance than his own life, the golden cloak and the royal helmet and plumes, he placed the latter upon his head, and bound it firmly on; and then taking the cloak out of its folds, fastened it securely round his own neck; it was intended to cover the shoulders, and fall to the knees of Anjah; but it sufficed to envelop the whole form of the dwarf, even to his very feet; and now with this rich shroud about him, he lashed himself to the mast, just in time to be saved from an impending death; for very soon the vessel divided asunder, and the drifting wreck to which Balzebar was attached, was tossed about at the mercy of the waves. How long he remained in this position he knew not; he became insensible from hunger and cold, and

would no doubt have soon perished had not some sailors on a vessel espied a glittering object at a distance. They came nearer to it, and discovered that it was a human being clinging to the masts of a ship; and rescuing him from his perilous situation, and seeing the royal garb in which he was arrayed, they conceived that he was some great prince, and treated him in a manner that accorded with such a supposition. He was taken on board the ship, and all treated him with the respect and deference to which his seeming high rank entitled him. When he reached the shore, a proclamation was issued, that a great prince had been found shipwrecked, and had been rescued in his royal robes; his person was also described as being as imposing and grand as were his habiliments, and notwithstanding that he was unable to speak one word, or make any intelligible sound, but kept up a disagreeable sort of muttering, no one seemed to discover that he was at all wanting in intellect, and the proclamation went on and stated his mind and accomplishments to be equal to his person. It

was only necessary for him to make his appearance with his golden cloak about him, and the helmet with the white plumes on his head, (and no one could persuade him for one moment to divest himself of them,) to have a crowd of adorers follow in his pathway with shouts and huzzas.

Indeed, such was their adulation, that they bore him about in a sort of triumphal car, and he became the people's idol. The little sense that Balzebar had ever been blessed with, had nearly all been lost in the hardships and dangers to which he had been exposed, and he allowed himself to be borne about, pleased as a child might have been with a pageant, in which he himself was the principal object.

At last the account of the finding of this wonderful prince in the golden cloak was read at the court, which had long been awaiting the return of Anjah and his suite, and when his fine person, and the helmet with the snowy plumes, were described, his subjects and friends, of course, felt very sure that it was no other than their own prince, and, as the country was

not far distant, a cavalcade was dispatched to make certain of the truth, and to attend him to his home. The King was not yet dead, but illness had so impaired his intellect that he had become perfectly imbecile and unfit to govern, and, in the absence of any acknowledged head, the affairs of the State were getting into sad confusion. When the messengers arrived, and were shown into the presence of Balzebar, although at first surprised to find that he could not speak one word to them, yet the moment he arose and displayed his glittering cloak before their eyes they felt ready to fall down at his feet, and acknowledge him their prince. Besides, the royal helmet and the white plumes, would, of itself, have been sufficient to convince them, if there had been no other proof; so, sending a herald before them with the joyful news that it was indeed the long-absent one, they prepared to escort him to his kingdom. The Queen could not leave the palace, on account of the weak state of the King, her husband, but the prime minister and all the courtiers, with crowds of the common people, went to the

very outskirts of the kingdom to meet the Prince, and, sending her love and kind messages by him, the Queen sat herself down to await as patiently as possible the arrival of her son. When the prime minister was shown into the presence of Balzebar he started back in astonishment, "Could this be Prince Anjah, this stunted being?" yet here truly was his helmet and his snowy plumes, and then here, too, was his cloak of gold with which the rest of the courtiers were so blinded that they never thought for a moment of doubting that this was their prince indeed, but were as loud and instant in praise of his fine person and noble mien as all others had been before them. Disgusted with their shortsightedness, the prime minister, who was wiser than the rest, and never for a moment supposed that a noble youth like Anjah could have become this deformed and withered thing, whose ugliness no cloak of gold could conceal from him, turned to address the unconscious cause of so much error; instead of an answer came a low, indistinct muttering and mystical signs. The truth flashed

upon the mind of the prime minister—this was Balzebar, the poor little idiot mute, and, peering beneath the helmet, which, with the plumes, concealed his countenance, almost as much as the golden cloak did his person, recognised the dull, unmeaning eyes and the expressionless mouth of the poor dwarf. Keeping his discovery in his own breast, and pretending to share in the delusion of the rest, he prepared to join in the procession which was to attend Balzebar to the palace, but, before reaching the gates of the city, under pretence of hastening home to prepare for the better reception of the Prince, he obtained leave to arrive at the palace before the rest, in reality to reveal his discovery to the Queen, and to prepare her mind for the great disappointment that she must feel, in not being able to welcome her son to his home. She wept bitter tears when he told his tale, and she thought of the probable fate of Anjah; but she was a high-souled woman, and bore herself in her misfortunes like a queen. She agreed with the minister that it was far better to encourage the infatuation of

the people till such time as the fate of Anjah should be decided, than to allow a person of more energy and address to get the present possession of the throne, from whom it would be impossible to wrest it, if he should still be alive. But their consultation was interrupted by the noisy shouts from without, which warned her of the approach of the procession. She instantly recognised Balzebar, whom she received as if he were indeed her son, and he was installed at once in the Prince's apartments in the palace, where all did him homage; and as, day by day, he used to show himself in his golden cloak on the balconies, his subjects became more enthusiastic than ever, and would greet him with shouts that rent the very skies. Preparations were immediately made for the ceremony of the coronation of the Prince (for the King seemed to be past all hope of recovering his reason), which, owing to the liberality of the people, who loved to honor their idol, was to be on a larger scale than any ever before known, and the whole kingdom seemed united in a desire to do homage to so great a prince.

About this time one morning a vessel hove in sight, and was spoken, and from the replies it was gathered that in it was the Prince Anjah, with his bride the Princess Merea; that the former had been shipwrecked, and was now returning, with all his train, to his native land. The news spread like wild-fire; great crowds came down to see the vessel; but it was at once determined on all hands that the new comer was an impostor, and that he should not be allowed to land; indeed, so great was the indignation manifested, they fired upon the ship, which hastily withdrew from the harbor out of their reach. What must have been the feelings of Anjah, who, after years of absence and escape from so many dangers, was thus greeted on coming in sight of his native shore, which he had left years before, followed by the blessings of the people. One thing was very certain; it was folly to attempt to land while there was such a feeling of opposition abroad, so they removed out of harm's way, and the vessel was anchored at a distance, but not out of the view of all, for from the towers of the palace

the mother of Anjah was watching the ship, for she, as well as the prime minister, had heard of the arrival of the stranger, and all day had been maturing their plans to restore Anjah to his home and his rights, and were only waiting for the night to seek the vessel, and bring him, his bride, and his companions on shore. Accordingly, as soon as it was dark, one or two devoted servants of the Queen, who were entrusted with the secret, went out in boats till they reached the ship, and there revealed to the Prince the state of things at home, and prevailed on him and his followers to return with them. They were landed as secretly as possible, and gained the palace without detection. Here they were met by the Queen and the prime minister; the former embraced her long-lost son and his bride with the most fervent affection, and they recounted to each other all the trials and dangers to which both had been subjected. It seems that Anjah had remained in the kingdom of Merea's father till a vessel had been fitted up for him, and, fearing to be again parted from Merea, after the

shipwreck, which had so nearly sundered them for ever, Anjah had determined, ere his departure, to make her his wife, so that she might accompany him to his home. When the ship was in readiness the nuptials had been celebrated, and they had set sail. Anjah recounted to his mother and the minister the history of the shipwreck, of the loss of Balzebar, the royal helmet and plumes, and of the golden cloak. The Queen and the minister, in their turn, related to Anjah the subsequent history of Balzebar, the infatuation of the people, and that on the morrow he was to be crowned King with great pomp. They all tried to devise some plan which, if adopted, might bring all things to their true and proper position. At last Anjah thought of a way of revealing himself to Balzebar, for upon a public recognition of him by the poor dwarf himself seemed to hang his only chance of being acknowledged. The night was spent in revolving this scheme, which was heartily approved by all.

On the morrow, early in the morning, a great crowd was assembled before the palace, each

striving to be foremost to get a place where they might witness so august a ceremony. All things were prepared on the most magnificent scale ; music resounded in peals to the skies ; trains of cavalry and infantry, with their glittering arms flashing in the sun, were filling in the courts ; in the midst was a platform under an awning, on which was placed a throne prepared for Balzebar, and when all was in readiness he was led forth. As the shouts of admiration went up, the dwarf lolled idly in his seat, and toyed with the golden sceptre that was presented to him ; his dull eye wandering without expression over the assembly. Anjah, in disguise, placed himself in front of him, and presently, when directly in his line of vision, raised the cap that shaded his brow, and gave him a full view of his countenance, at the same time fixing on him his eye. Balzebar was transfixed with astonishment for an instant ; then, with a cry of joy, rushing forward, tore off the royal helmet and the golden cloak, and threw them, with himself, at the feet of Anjah. A low murmur arose from the crowd as the well known and despised

dwarf, Balzebar, was before them, revealed in all his natural hideousness. At this moment the prime minister, who stood near at hand, threw the cloak of gold over the shoulders of Anjah, and placed the helmet with the white plumes upon his lofty brow, and, as they knew their true prince, a shout so triumphant arose from the assembled multitude that it seemed like the breaking of thunder.

No farther notice was taken of Balzebar, but the crown was placed on the head of Anjah, who now brought forward the Princess Merea, and presented her as his spouse, and their future Queen. The whole procession returned to the palace, in which Anjah was received as the reigning prince. The King, though he recovered sufficiently to recognise his son, remained still too weak in mind to admit of his assuming the reins of government, which he quietly resigned to his heir, and passed a quiet and peaceful old age, cheered by the kind attentions of his Queen and his daughter-in-law, the Princess Merea, to whom he became tenderly attached. As for Balzebar, he returned to pri-

vate life with a much better grace than many others who have been thrown down from a less exalted position. He was ever an intimate of the palace, and was appointed by the King as "Keeper of the Royal Helmet and Golden Cloak," a post for which he had before showed himself particularly fitted, and to which he thenceforth, as before, remained faithful. He lived long enough to follow the son and daughter of the Prince and Princess as he had done their father and mother before them. As for Anjah and Merea, they ever retained the good opinion and admiration of their subjects, and bequeathed a prosperous and peaceful kingdom to their heirs.

VIII.

THE WONDERFUL BIRD.

ONCE upon a time an old man felt himself to be dying, and, calling his family (consisting of three sons, named Obed, Mozam, and Sadoc) to his bedside, took leave of them one by one, according to the fashion of the east, and, after recommending to their joint protection an aged uncle, who had long been unable to take care of himself, and bidding them be honest and industrious, he addressed them thus :—" My sons, I leave you in possession of this cottage, its furniture, and a small amount of treasure in gold, the fruits of many years' labor, and I wish you to remain here like brothers, and work together in amity till the death of your uncle, so that he will not be a burden upon either of you ; besides this, I am able, by means of the power which has latterly been given me, to foresee future

events, and to predict that to one of you will come good fortune through the means of a wonderful bird, who is to be the cause of this great wealth. To which of you it is to come I cannot determine, nor is it of much importance that you should know; it is only required of you each to do his duty, and leave all the rest to Providence." Obed and Mozam were delighted to hear this good news, each one secretly thinking himself the fortunate one; but poor Sadoc, who was the youngest, and the most dutiful of the three, was so grieved at the prospect of parting with his dear father, who had always been so kind and indulgent to him, that he thought little about this prophecy, as he sat by the bedside, and closed the eyes that should never again look upon him with the light of life and love.

After his father was dead he sat by his corpse till, overcome by weariness (the result of previous long watching), he fell asleep. His brothers had retired to rest early in the evening, and he had supposed them slumbering for hours before; but about midnight the eldest,

Obed, who had not undressed himself, hearing the deep, regular breathing of Sadoc, which assured him that he would not easily awaken, stole softly into the room, and, finding the keys, took the box of money from under the bed, and unlocking it, secreted all the gold that he could find in his pockets, and, taking a small bundle of clothes in his hand, started off as rapidly as possible, leaving the body of his father still unburied in the house.

The next morning, when it was discovered that Obed had gone, and that the strong box had been robbed of all its treasure, the second son, Mozam, was loud in his exclamations against the wickedness and ingratitude of his elder brother; but Sadoc felt so disgraced by his conduct he said hardly a word in his grief, but silently went on with the preparations for his father's funeral, and had him interred with all the appearance of decency and respect possible, in the absence of the first-born son, he who should have been the principal mourner, and at night retired to rest less sad, from feeling the happy consciousness of having done his duty.

And now it was shown that Mozam was in reality no better than his brother Obed, for no sooner was Sadoc fast asleep in his own bed than the second brother arose and let into the door several men who had been waiting outside, and, with their assistance, loaded a cart with all the effects of the cottage that were movable, and drove off with them to the pawn-brokers, who advanced on them a sum of money, with which he made off, as his brother had done before him. When Sadoc arose in the morning he found every article of furniture missing, with the exception of his own and his uncle's bed, and a few old worthless pots and pans; and his aged relative was seated in the chimney-corner on an old settle, gazing around with a stare of dismay on the scene of devastation. While Sadoc remained shocked, speechless, he heard a sort of chuckling noise, and, looking to see from whence it proceeded, found that an old speckled hen had stolen a nest in some wool that lay under the seat of his uncle, and was there sitting upon a large number of eggs. Here, thought poor Sadoc,

is another mouth to feed, and, going into the granary, picked up a few grains of corn and some seeds which he threw to the hen. He then sat down sadly to devise a plan by which he could get bread for himself and his helpless dependent. Had he been alone there would have been no difficulty; the wide world would have been before him, and, with his energy and perseverance, he could soon have achieved a fortune without the intervention of any wonderful bird, and he must now give up any hopes he might have had of finding it. He felt that his father's last injunction, to take care of his poor idiot brother, was, now that his elders had both proved themselves unworthy of their trusts, doubly binding upon him, so he went out and hired himself to the first master that he could find, as a common laborer, and toiled hard all day for a few scanty pennies, which bought just bread enough to keep himself and his uncle from actual starvation, and a few crumbs for his old hen. After going on a week or two in this way, he came home one night and found the hen had brought out a large brood of

chickens. He had now to work harder to procure them a little food also, on which they seemed to thrive ; and as spring advanced, and the warm weather came, the old man used to let them out of the coop, and wandered with them about the meadows, where they picked up worms, grasshoppers, and such seeds as they could find, and they grew through the summer so well, that by the time of the Christmas market, they were as plump as partridges, and half of them sold for quite a little sum of money, which he laid by, and sold the eggs of the remaining ones for enough to pay for their food during winter. In the spring, most of them bringing out large broods, he had quite a lot of chickens for the fall market, and eggs to sell all the summer, so that he found after several seasons that he had money enough—the proceeds of his eggs and chickens—to purchase a little spot of rocky ground close beside his cottage, where he meant his uncle should amuse himself, in picking up stones, and planting a few turnips and cabbages. Now we leave him happy and contented, though in poverty so

deep, and see what has become of his brothers, who went off to seek the wonderful bird.

On the night that Obed had stolen away with the gold, when he had reached an eminence just beyond, he looked back on the little cottage, where his father's body lay, and where his brothers were so peacefully sleeping, and his conscience smote him for a moment, for the wrong which he was doing them ; but quickly stifling the voice within, he said to himself, "It is now too late to return and replace the money ; I should probably be discovered, while doing it, and then the disgrace would be the same ; besides I shall, no doubt, be soon able to give them back ten times the value of that I have taken with me ; for when I obtain this wonderful bird, which is to make the fortune of one of us, and as I am the oldest, I feel certain that it is my own, I shall come back again, and enrich them all. I should really do them a greater injustice if I staid at home till this money should be spent, and deprived myself of the means of finding it, than by going now, and making a certainty of securing it. And

thus having succeeded in quieting all scruples, he went on as fast as he was able, till after several days, having gone a long distance, he began to proceed on his course more leisurely, without fear of pursuit. And now his mind began to be more and more upon the wonderful bird, and he listened to all the tales of travelers of the birds of Paradise, and of the desert bird, of the owls that hooted dismally through the woods, and the nightingales that cheered the darkness with their melody. Great flocks of birds passed over his head, eastward, and westward, and southward; some of the most beautiful plumage, but none ever stopped in their flight to point him to the treasure that he longed for, but they soared away out of his sight. At last, after a long time, he heard of a bird, which had been known to do many wonderful things. It was said to have it in its power to foretell future events; had pointed out to many persons the places where they found lost money and goods, and was in all respects a most remarkable fowl. "Now," thought Obed, when stories of its superior pow-

ers were recounted to him, "I am coming at last to the object of my desires; this is the bird by whose means I am to realize the great prediction made by my father, and now I can congratulate myself upon the wisdom of the course which I have pursued, in putting myself in a way to find this marvelous creature. I might have staid at home all my lifetime, and have been no richer, though all this fortune (the secret of which this bird no doubt possesses,) stands waiting for me." So losing not a single moment, he set off to the place where it was being exhibited. He reached an inn at the town that same night, and made so many inquiries concerning it, as to awaken the attention of all present. Among the rest, stopping at the tavern were two men, who seemed disposed to be very sociable with him. They treated him to drink, and professed to feel a great and sudden friendship for him; they threw him completely off his guard, and before he retired to bed he had told them all about the prophecy of his father, and was silly enough to reveal to them that he carried a bag of money with him.

After he left the room, they sat whispering together, and laughing about him, and then calling him a great fool, as he was to be sure, they followed him to bed likewise. Now these two very men belonged to the company that were exhibiting the bird, and were stationed at the inn on purpose to gain all the information that they could about the people in the town, so that they could by means of the bird, convey to them such a knowledge of their own private affairs, as to surprise the credulous at once into a belief of its supernatural powers. They had got all the information they wanted concerning Obed, and early in the morning left the inn, to get the conjurer who managed the bird, in readiness to receive him, while he lay dreaming of being in a world where every thing was turned into gold.

As soon as the hour appointed for the performance of its magical tricks had come, Obed presented himself before the bird. It was a macaw, with brilliant plumage; under its feet was a plate, marked like the dial of a clock; it would walk three times around this, and pres-

ently, with one of its toes, point to a particular mark, which the exhibiter pretended to interpret and explain. When Obed stood before it, it began to flutter its wings, and showed great signs of agitation, which was said to be because it was going to predict some great fortune to him. This at the offset so prejudiced Obed in its favor, that he was prepared to believe every word that followed. The bird then walked round the dial three times and pointed to a mark; the exhibiter commenced explaining it. At first, he repeated as much of Obed's plans and history as the two men had picked up the night before, which gave him, in the course of fifteen minutes, such confidence in its ability, that had the bird told him to go to the bottom of the sea in search of the treasure, he would have been almost stupid enough to have done it; but they told him no such thing, for they were not at all desirous of putting him out of the way till they had got possession of his bag of money.

They told him to wait till night came, and then to go alone to a cave, which they pointed out to him, about half a mile distant from

the town, through the woods, where he would find an old hermit, who would meet him, and show him where he could find an immense treasure. They then dismissed him.

Obed was so impatient to come into possession of his wealth, he scarcely ate or drank all day, and as soon as it was dark, set off in search of the cave. After groping about for a long while, and falling down several times, he came at last upon it, and was rather surprised at not finding the hermit in waiting for him; but seeing a torch approach, concluded that it must be he; but was soon much surprised at seeing instead three men, two of whom he recognized as the same who had been the night before at the tavern. They came upon him, and suddenly seizing him, gave him a most unmerciful beating. They then bound him hand and foot, and took from him his money; and after making themselves merry for a while at his expense, left him lying upon the ground half dead, telling him that no doubt the hermit would come and show him the treasure before morning. There he lay all night, moaning and crying,

and then came to his mind thoughts of his own undutiful conduct, in leaving his brothers unprovided for, and he felt that he was only justly punished for all his wickedness. He was not only half frozen with the cold, but was in a fright lest some beast of prey should come upon him in this helpless state, all bound as he was, and mangle or devour him; but he was relieved from the worst of his fears in the morning; for a company of sailors passing that way going to their vessel, found him in this pitiable condition; they helped him up on one of their mules, and bearing him to the inn, from whence he had come, made inquiries concerning the two men, and the owners of the bird, but found they had gone off early the evening preceding; and though great exertions were made by the people of the town, almost all of whom had been in some way or other deceived by them, no traces of them could be found.

Now poor Obed knew not what course to pursue; he had no money, to return to his native home; and even if he had, shame would have prevented his doing so; he therefore ac-

cepted the offer of the sailors, that he should join them, and go on board the ship; and while he is passing a life of toil and hardship upon the perilous ocean, let us go back and trace out the history of his second brother, Mozam.

As soon as he left his home, he went directly to a neighboring seaport, and embarked in a vessel that was going to the coast of Africa, as if thinking that the farther he got from his home, the greater would be the chances of his finding the bird of promise. After reaching the land, he roamed about from place to place, till nearly all his money had gone, and yet no richer or wiser. Multitudes of birds of every shape and hue, daily passed before his eyes. At last he fell in with a company who were crossing the desert in a caravan, and many strange sights were seen by Mozam. Nothing awakened his wonder so much as the gigantic ostriches that ran much swifter than horses over the sands. "Surely," thought he, "what creature is more capable of revealing any knowledge or mystery to man than this—what bird could be one-half so wonderful; this must be

the creature that is to exercise such an influence over my fortunes." But yet nothing occurred, day after day, to confirm his hopes of their being able to assist him, though hundreds of them passed daily before him.

But one day, one of these creatures who seemed very tame, came near the caravan, and allowed itself to be fed, caressed, and petted by the company, which excited much wonder; but above all, they were surprised at finding a string hung with bits of gold and shells about its neck, and no one could explain this strange problem. But Mozam, although he kept his convictions secret, was satisfied in his mind as to the meaning of it. So in the morning before any else were stirring, he stole off to the inclosure where the animal had been confined, and mounting upon its back, he let it go free. It flew off with such speed that he could at first hardly contrive to hold himself on; but by degrees he became accustomed to its motion, and maintained his seat. To say that he felt no fear, while this immense creature was sweeping along with him over the trackless wastes, would

be untrue; but he felt quite sure that it was sent as the harbinger of his good fortune, and that the gold around its neck was a sure indication of its being able to conduct him to a mine of that precious metal. So, blinded by ambition to the danger of his situation, he continued on till the ostrich ran with him into a camp of Bedouins, from whom the bird had wandered; a set of wild people, the very last whom Mozam would have desired to have encountered; and from whose mercy he had so little to hope. He looked every moment for them to strike him dead, but instead of this, they only amused themselves in tormenting him to see him writhe, which was almost worse than death. As these people subsisted upon raw flesh and roots, he was almost starved, and as they were constantly fighting with other barbarous tribes, his life was all the time in danger. Here was a fine end to all his ambitious schemes, and he had plenty of leisure and cause to repent his early misconduct. He had brought ruin upon his own head. So miserable was he among these barbarians, he was several

times on the point of making way with himself. He continued in this miserable state of existence, till at last, tired of carrying him about with them, these people sold him as a slave to the Barbary States; and here let him remain, while we continue the history of Sadoc.

It will be remembered that with the money that he had saved he purchased a small lot. On digging, it was found to contain a quarry of valuable stone, which he immediately set about getting out in order for sale, and it yielded such a quantity, and sold at so high a rate, that he soon began to be a capitalist, and able to enter into speculations, which, proving successful, he soon found himself above want, and in time became the largest landed proprietor in the country. He now built a fine mansion where his father's old cottage, which was pulled down, had stood, and married a lady as wise and prudent as himself, and with as noble a family of children around him as one could desire, he enjoyed as great an amount of happiness as generally falls to the lot of man. The fame of his benevolence spread abroad, and he

was more respected for his integrity than any other person in the country. Notwithstanding all the honors that were showered upon him, he never forgot his duty to his poor old uncle, who used to sit, as he had ever done, in the warm chimney-corner, the long winter days and nights, and doze away his life with the old speckled hen, who was aged like himself, in her nest beside him.

During all this long time he had heard nothing from his brothers, and often wondered what had become of them, and which of them had found the bird, according to his father's prediction.

One evening about this time, at the entrance of the town where Sadoc resided, a poor sailor was seen coming wearily along. He sat himself upon a stone, and seemed overcome with his emotions. The tears stole down his cheeks, and he looked as if he could not advance a step further. While he sat there, another traveler, in very nearly the same plight as himself, came up with him. The last comer was a tall, dark man, who seemed to have been bronzed by

exposure to the sun. Seeing each other in a like sad condition, they entered into conversation; then at last it came out they were the brothers, Obed and Mozam, one of whom, worn out with voyaging, had left his vocation of mariner to find an asylum in the poor-house of his native town; the other, who had escaped from slavery, and toiled his way along on foot for miles and miles, was coming for the same purpose. They rushed into each other's arms, and shed tears of pity at the sorrowful case in which each found the other, and then, feeling not quite so lonely, they went on together into the town. They bent their course toward the spot their boyhood had known so well, where the old cottage had stood. In its place was a splendid mansion, at which they gazed for a few moments, and were about to turn away, when a friendly voice hailed them, and arrested their retreating footsteps; and when they said that they were travellers, without food or place of shelter, they were led into an apartment where a warm fire was blazing, and were requested to seat themselves while a servant

should procure them some food. Obed started back in amazement as he caught sight of a figure seated in the chimney-corner, and exclaimed, "My poor old uncle, yet alive and here." Mozam knew him at the same time, and, turning round as the master of the house entered, recognised in him Sadoc, their brother (for he had not changed half as much as themselves), and whispered his discovery to Obed. They consulted apart, and feared to reveal themselves lest he should spurn them on account of their poverty, their former misconduct, and his present grandeur; but ere long their feelings overpowered them; they fell down at his feet, and asked his forgiveness and his pity.

Sadoc, though at first he could hardly believe that this poor worn sailor was his brother Obed, and still less that the dark and haggard man was the once handsome Mozam, yet he was convinced of the truth. He pardoned them freely, and wept tears over their misfortunes, and promised them they should never want a home while he was able to give them one. All

night long Obed and Mozam sat by the fireside recounting their adventures to their brother, and at last, when they had told all, Sadoc spake, and said, "How strange that the prophecy of our father should not yet have been fulfilled; the wonderful bird has not been found." At this the old uncle, who had all the while been dozing in the corner, suddenly roused up, and said, pointing to the old hen beside him, "This is the wonderful bird, and the founder of your good fortune," and directly relapsed into his stupor. The truth then flashed upon the mind of Sadoc, and when he related to his brother the history of the hen, it was as clear to their minds as to his own, that it was to her that his father's prediction related, and that this was the bird that was to bring such riches to the family. They saw that honesty, and a careful attention to duty, was more likely to bring a man to prosperity at last, than roguery and selfishness. But, as they had paid so dearly for their early misdemeanors, they were permitted to enjoy rest in the house of Sadoc, where they recovered in some degree from the

effect of their hardships and sufferings, and were contented and happy. As for the old uncle, he died shortly after this ; and the old speckled hen about the same time departed this life ; but Sadoc never forgot his gratitude for her services, though he lived to a great age.

IX.

THE MERMAID AND HER CHILD.

A mermaid was sporting on the surface of the ocean ; in her arms was her babe, which she nourished at her breast, as a human mother would have done her own offspring. While she was lightly rocking to and fro, a ship came in sight, running before the wind, the keel ploughing the white foam, sails unfurled, and streamers flying. The mermaid knew not what it was—she thought it might be a huge sea monster ; never before had she seen aught like it, for her home was in those unfrequented seas, which the ships of men have not explored. She gazed awhile on it in wonder, retreating, but with her eye still fixed ; while thus lost in astonishment and awe, an enormous shark, that had been watching her, came swiftly, and snatched the infant from her arms, and ere she

was aware, bore it beneath the surface. The mother immediately dived in pursuit, but came in sight only in time to see the young one devoured by a hundred voracious creatures, like that which had torn it from her ; and she barely escaped from them with her own life. In her agony, not heeding whither she went, all day long she kept in the path of the vessel, and midnight found her still following it, in a furious storm, which she fearlessly and stoutly breasted. The sea was her native element, and the raging of the waters was like music to her ear. At last shrieks from the ship roused her from the apathy into which her grief had plunged her, and looking up, she saw the tall masts, which had seemed to reach the very skies, broken and dismantled, and the vessel itself about to dash upon the rocks, from which it had no power of escaping. But ere this, a boat had been lowered, and living beings, whose forms were wonderful and strange to her, (by the aid of a rope,) had been let down from the side of the ship, and placed safely within it. At last a mother and her child

together, in descending, missed the tossing bark, and both fell into the sea. The mother was quickly rescued, but her babe had fallen from her arms, and sank out of her sight ; and the sailors were forced, notwithstanding the beseeching petition of the agonized mother, to push off and leave it to its fate, or the boat, and all in it, would have been swamped in the whirlpool, which drew in all surrounding objects, as the vessel, which presently was dashed in pieces, rapidly filled, and sank into the depths of the ocean. The mermaid saw all, and diving below, she received the babe in her open arms, and on beholding its beautiful and innocent countenance, she rejoiced over it, as if she had found a treasure, and tenderly nourishing it and hushing its cries, she bore it far away to her home in those unknown seas, from which she had wandered. Here amid the labyrinths of waters, spring up tiny islands of coral, covered with verdure, high above the reach of the floods, which dash around them. On one of these, scarcely larger than the cradle which it was to imitate, the mermaid made a

bed for the little charge, and as in this clime, "eternal summer reigns," she left the child sleeping warmly and securely beneath a large spreading tree, which protected it from the sun, and fanned its slumbers with broad green leaves, while she sought her companions and her boy Rosond, whom she found near the spot, and who welcomed her with joy, after her long absence. Curiously they looked upon the little daughter with the blue eyes and fair brow; and not doubting that it was her own infant, born during her absence, they could but be amazed at its strange form, and in their hearts, pitied the poor mother, whose little one would undoubtedly soon perish, as it would never be able, like their own offspring, to paddle about or to live in the waters without assistance. Little the mother regarded or seemed to need their sympathy; she appeared quite happy and contented in what they considered her great affliction; and wondering at her insensibility, they left her alone with her children.

The little Corala, for so her sea-mother named her, throve under the watchful care of

the mermaid and the boy Rosond, one or the other of whom was forever with her, bearing her about in their arms on the sunny waters, or from island to island. Sometimes they would dive with her, for a moment, beneath the sea, then would hold her aloft, with the water dripping from her form, at which she would toss her dimpled arms, and shout with laughter. She soon began to creep about, then stand upon her feet and move in a strange sort of way; and the mother, trembling to see her totter, never left her for a moment, for fear of losing her. She was often thrown into great distress, as Corala, stealing off in spite of her, would roguishly hide herself among the bushes where her mother and brother (who could not move at all on land, but were only able to creep near her, sailing by the edge of the island) could not see her, or reach her; but as she always presently relieved their fears by returning to them and throwing herself into their arms, the mother soon began to feel more confidence in her ability to take care of herself. As she grew older she was allowed often to venture

out of sight, on her promising to return to them soon; and as no harm ever happened to her, they frequently bore her from the little isle of infancy to larger ones—which she explored to their centers; and after having been gone for hours, would return to her friends laden with berries and fruits, which she found much more to her taste than the sea-food that had heretofore formed her nutriment. She learned also in time to swim, where the waters were not very deep, and used to accompany Rosond on little aquatic expeditions; though ever when she grew tired of her exertions, he would carry her in his arms till she reached a place of rest.

By the time that she had reached her thirteenth year she had gone over all the islands that lay around, and found these fairy realms peopled with birds and butterflies, and the smaller sort of animals, such as rabbits and squirrels, who soon came to know her, and to leap in her pathway without fear. She moved about among them like a queen amid her subjects; and, like a queen, indeed, she looked, for on her brow she wore a diadem of precious

gems, which Rosond had brought from the depths of the ocean. Her robe, like that of the mermen and mermaids around her, was made of the variously and gaily-colored seaweed, which formed a silken scarf for her shoulders, and a petticoat, reaching just below the knees, such as was generally worn by these people of the waters, which left her fair arms and gleaming feet bare in their beauty. Thus shining and sparkling in the sun, she would sit on the shore and arrange the beautiful flowers, with which the islands abounded, into nosegays of magic grace, to present to such of Rosond's playfellows as came to visit him, and the strange little sister, of whom he was so fond, and with whom he had rather spend his hours than to join them in their frolicksome sports, chasing the gold-fish through the sparkling waves, and leaping high in the air, in their wild glee. Rosond loved to watch the varying expression of her eyes, and ever seemed to regard her as a superior being; and the mother, too, when the mermen and mermaids commiserated the unfortunate one who was deprived, by what

they considered her deformity, of many of their sources of enjoyment, felt a proud and happy consciousness (though she kept her secret to herself) that her child was one of those immortal natures of whom the sages of their race had recorded such wonders. Yet her heart began to fail her as Corala grew to womanhood, and the fear that perhaps the truth might some day burst upon the mind, whose workings terrified her, unused as she was to the operations of human reason, and she trembled for the revelations that such a spirit might be capable of making when it reached its maturity. As her mind expanded she constantly sought food for its inquiring activity, and became much interested in the tales of worlds beyond the waters, peopled by a race of mortal immortals, having perishable bodies, but spirits that must live for ever; and her brother Rosond, inspired by her earnestness, became almost as eager as herself to unravel the secrets of their existence. Yet, whenever in their mother's presence they broached this topic, she checked their inquiries with such an unusual tone of disquiet and

sternness, that it had the very opposite effect on the mind of Corala from that the mermaid intended, by giving to the subject, by this appearance of mystery, a peculiar and romantic interest. And, notwithstanding that the theme was for ever at rest while with the mother, yet, when alone with Rosond, Corala gave loose reins to her fancy; but, in answer to her questions and conjectures, Rosond, who had never been allowed by his mother to go beyond his native seas, could only repeat to her the vague and unsatisfactory talk of those almost as ignorant as himself.

As Corala grew older, her sympathy with the beings about her, with the exception of her mother and Rosond, diminished; as for the former, though she did not understand the thoughtfulness that sat on the brow of her child and shadowed her birth, the soul's longing for sympathy from responsive spirits, yet, so great was her love and her gentleness towards her, that Corala clung to her with the same affection she would have done to her own natural mother. As for Rosond, so constantly

was he in companionship with his sister that his mind became in time assimilated to hers, and, from having ever in contemplation a higher order of intellect, the society of his former associates became as distasteful to him as to Corala. Soon they were left almost entirely to themselves, and the mother, satisfied at seeing them happy—to all appearance happy—left them free to roam together where they would, never dreaming that Corala was for ever talking of the worlds beyond, and of the beings that peopled them. But so it was; and as time advanced Rosond had the grief of seeing his dear sister pining away under the influence of the unspeakable longing that possessed her, and, in his anxiety to relieve it, he formed a plan which he imparted to Corala, by means of which together they would be enabled to know more of those countries towards which Corala's heart seemed ever to be yearning. Accordingly, when all at night were in their resting places, sunk in sleep, Rosond, with Corala in his arms, were sailing on the seas making such discoveries as was in their power, and each morn-

ing they were found in their usual places, so that they excited no suspicion. Again and again they set out and returned, and were so rewarded for their exertions by the wonders that were thus revealed to them that they grew elated and fearless of danger. But yet no information concerning the other worlds was afforded them, and they began to despair of learning what they wished. One night, however, having reached the point where their wanderings usually terminated, Rosond was about to go back, but Corala still urged him onward; and, notwithstanding his misgivings, in accordance with her wishes, he emerged with her from the warm and quiet waters into the dashing, foaming sea, over which the blue sky and stars shone clear and pure. New feelings filled the soul of Corala, new voices were speaking in her ears; she was as it were in an ecstasy, and, wrapt in the enjoyment, she forgot all else at the moment. While Rosond paused at her request, and she was looking around, she espied a great object in the distance that riveted her whole attention. A tiny

speck on the water seemed to be following it, like a bird with its little one beside it, but in truth it was a ship far off, and a boat which had been let down by the seamen, one of whom from the deck having espied through a glass what seemed to be a maiden riding upon the waves, they were coming to satisfy themselves concerning this strange sight. The little speck gradually grew larger and larger as it came nearer to her, till it at last it looked like one of her own tiny islands afloat upon the waves, with living beings upon it. She held her breath lest it might alarm Rosond, who, bearing her on high in his arms, was concealed beneath the waters, and saw nothing above him. Noiselessly and stealthily the boat approached her. Corala perceived, and her heart bounded at the sight, that the forms of the creatures that were moving within were like her own, and in a moment the truth darted into her brain. She was not then an isolated being, but one of a race, and these were her kindred. How her heart yearned towards them ! Their gaze was fascinated on their leader, as cautiously they

floated towards her ; no sound escaped her lips till the shriek she uttered when she found herself torn from the arms of Rosond, and borne away within the hearing of his cries—seeing him beaten back by the oars, as he vainly endeavored to pursue and rescue her, till at last, fainting with affright, she became unconscious of all that passed. When she was restored to herself she was on the vessel, which was bearing her fast away from all that she had known and loved. Most pitiful was the moaning she made as the tenants of the ship gathered around, and tried in vain to comfort her. She at first refused all consolation ; yet, in time, as the poignancy of her grief abated, and she looked more calmly around, she felt herself inspired with a new and more powerful interest in life ; every glance conveyed intelligence ; all about her, like herself, were reasoning and thinking. She was ONE in a mass of SOULS, and, though she could not comprehend a single word they uttered, yet their expression and gestures conveyed to her a meaning that she could well interpret. When they reached

the port from which the vessel sailed, the news spread afar like wildfire, that a young maiden of great beauty, speaking a language that no one understood, had been rescued from the grasp of a frightful sea monster, so that many came from great distances to see her. Among others was a gentleman and lady of high rank, who, on beholding Corala, were so impressed with her appearance, that they determined to take her home with them, and adopt her for their own daughter, as their only child had been lost at sea years before, while still an infant, and strange to say, if she had lived, would have been about the age that Corala now appeared to be; and stranger still it seemed, when it was made known that Corala had been rescued near the very spot where the shipwreck had occurred so many years before; and to their redoubled wonder, the likeness of Corala to both of them, was remarked by many persons, as if she had been their daughter indeed; so that the mother could hardly help feeling that their child had been saved by some good spirit; nurtured and restored to her again

by the mercy of heaven. But as this would have been deemed madness, she kept her thoughts to herself, and only revealed them to her husband, who, like her, felt as if heaven indeed had interposed in their behalf, and that the beautiful girl they bore to their pleasant home was their lost darling. Corala found relief in this quiet spot by the seaside, from the noise and bustle of the town, the confusion of tongues, and the curious gazers who came on board the ship to see her. Enraptured with the beauty of all that surrounded her, she would have been most happy could she have forgotten that her sea-mother and Rosond, far away, were mourning their lost one; and she wept in bitterness at the thought that she should never again behold those who loved her so dearly, and were by her so dearly loved. Soon by the care and patience of her new-found mother she became acquainted with the names of the various objects that she saw around, and very rapidly she learned to express herself in sentences. At last she could relate to them the tales of her infancy, of her cradle on the

sea-girt isle, of her sea-mother, and her sea-brother, that she longed again to find. They deemed it all a fantasy of her imagination; and she, finding how little faith her hearers had in her representations, kept these remembrances to herself. However, they only grew more vivid from being thus repressed, and were still her first thoughts. As she made progress in the language, she was taught to read, and gradually the treasures of knowledge were unfolded to her. The universe, which had been to her sealed, was now as it were opening before her; she began to unravel its mysteries, and her whole being expanded in the genial atmosphere by which she was surrounded. So passed several years, but time did not efface from her memory the images of her early days; each new joy only rendered more poignant her grief, that the companions of her infancy were debarred from these pleasures to which she had such free access. Each day found her in a favorite seat by the water-side, looking afar at the sea, watching it toss on the shore, and listening to the roar of its waters, as if such sounds

could tell her the fate of those for whom her heart yearned, and for whom every night she put up a petition to heaven.

And now let us leave Corala for a while, and see what has become of the protectors of her helpless infancy. When Rosond, after giving up all hope of recovering his sister, returned with the sad news to his mother that she was lost to them, in a frenzy she flew hither and thither. Then, for the first time, her companions of the sea learned that she who had lived for years among them, whom they had despised, was one of those immortal natures for whom they had been taught such veneration. Rosond also now learned his sister's history, and great was his grief to find that she was not only far removed from him in space, but was also above him in the scale of being; yet he felt he could still but worship her as he had ever done. The mermen and mermaids at first pitied Rosond and his mother; but when they found them ever dwelling upon the one sad theme, nearest to their hearts, they forsook them for more cheerful companions, till they were left at last

to wander about alone together. All their conversation turned upon the engrossing topic—would Coral ever again be restored? At last they heard of an old wizard of the sea, who like a hermit dwelt in a cave in the depths of the ocean, and who was said to have the power of foretelling future events. Together they sought his dwelling-place, which for an age he had not left. The door was guarded by two sea monsters, whose eyes glared, as the two went tremblingly by, but they only opened their terrific jaws to shut them harmlessly again; so they passed safely in. Upon a heap of sea-weed piled up with books, on which was inscribed strange characters, sat the wizard of the sea; he was bent and wrinkled, and when they told him their errand he shook his briny locks, muttered strange words, and taking a curious shell in his hand, placed it at his ear and listened long. The mermaid fearfully asked, “shall the dear child, that I have so long cherished and loved as my own, ever be restored to my arms?” He paused, with the shell at his ear, and then made answer—“The voices of

the deep wail and cry ; she can never more return to her home on the sea-girt isle, for she is a mortal, and has found her kind ; be therefore content and go in peace ; seek no further into the hidden things of the future." But they still lingered. At last Rosond spoke and said : " If indeed it is decreed that she can never return to us, can we not go to her, and again see her beautiful countenance, and have our hearts cheered by the music of her loving voice ? " The sage turned over leaf after leaf, and searched into the mysterious tomes, till they grew weary with waiting, yet would not depart till he bade them ; so much did they long to hear what fate had in store for them ; while he seemed as it were to be dozing, and then at last unclosing his eyes, he sleepily muttered, holding a shell that glowed like living fire to his ear, made answer, " All things are possible to superhuman power ; if, after the lapse of many years, you can find again the lost one, and your love for her is then as strong as now, and she is able to reveal to you that she still loves you as in days gone bye,

then may you take her nature, and be united to her again ; but she can never return to you while you are of another race. Hence ! no more disturb the slumbers of the aged, who soon shall sleep forever. Then he fell back and relapsed into a repose so deep, that they sought no more to arouse him, but hand in hand passed out as they had entered, and returned to their home again.

Here they related to their companions the words of the wizard, and declared their intention of seeking Corala, and endeavoring to ascertain if she still loved them as of yore. The mermen and mermaids endeavored to dissuade Rosond and his mother from attempting what must be a fruitless task. "For," said they, "should you succeed in discovering whither she is carried, and to communicate with her, which is almost an impossibility, how can you suppose that she would regard you as she once did ? Perhaps," said they, "she even now remembers with a shudder the friends of her former days, and, happy amid her own kindred, strives to banish all thoughts of the

repulsive beings whom she once loved." Though all this seemed so reasonable, and so likely to be the truth, yet Rosond and his mother had such a certain conviction of the intensity of Corala's attachment to themselves, that they even dared to hope, in spite of all, that one day they might be united to her again. Their companions used all their arts to persuade them to abandon these hopes, that they deemed so fallacious, and to leave Corala, and return again to their accustomed sports. But no words could prevail upon them to give up the search, and, bidding adieu to all that had ever known them, they set off together.

On their voyage over the wide waste of waters the spot they both were intent on seeking was that from whence Corala had been borne away, and, when found, they made it the starting point from which they sailed long distances, only to return, after vain efforts to gain some clue that might lead them in the direction to find her once more. Months and even years passed, and yet no success had attended their wanderings; and, almost hopeless, they came

back to the well-known spot, from whence all their journeyings had proceeded. One day, while hovering around, in the distance they saw an object, that both had learned to know well—a ship, bearing the same colors as that which had been wrecked before the eyes of the mermaid, and Rosond also marked it as being like the vessel which had borne Corola from them. A sudden hope darted into the minds of both. Could they not, by following it, reach the place to which Corola had been carried? It probably was bending its course in the same direction as the other ship had gone. Day after day saw them in this hope, tirelessly pursuing the vessel, that, like a leading star, pointed out their course.

The journey seemed almost endless, but at last the scenes began to change before their eyes ; the broad waste of waters gradually narrowed; and seemed to be bounded by land, not in small islands, like dots here and there, as they had been accustomed to see, but a broad expanse, even as the ocean itself, over which the eye could not reach, covered with a gar-

ment of emerald, where stately towers and spires rose pointing to the skies. All was strange and wonderful to them, and they clung to each other, and kept beneath the waters, but still in sight of the vessel that had led them on, for they felt less lonely when near to that which had so long been as a beacon before them. The ship at last was moored, and hidden by some rocks. Rosond and the mermaid watched the busy crowds who came flocking down to the water, to welcome the friends who disembarked from the decks. There were among them female forms who moved as Corala once had done. But well they knew she was not there, nor was she in the throng that flocked along the pier, or hung over the sides, day after day. They floated at a distance from the shore, and at last, going out of sight of the ship, and sailing with swiftness past the various cities and towns, they began to feel the very hopelessness of their ever being able, amid such myriads of living creatures, of finding her whom they sought. Yet Rosond, although in despair of gaining the object of his search, longed to know more of her race, and, approach-

ing as near the land as he dared without fear of discovery, contemplated the faces, and forms, and movements of those who came within his sight.

A long period passed in this manner, and, sick at heart, the mother and son one evening, when the moon was shining clearly, left behind them all the noise and bustle of the towns, and followed the current, which carried them beside a peaceful and quiet country. At last, as daylight passed away, they floated near the shore, where a castled mansion stood on a hill alone, overlooking the peaceful waters. The air was soft and balmy, and warm as that of their native clime, to which their hearts now sometimes turned, as towards a haven where they might find rest. They gazed in wonder at the beauty of the green slope, studded here and there with oases of flowers, in the midst of which marble fountains threw up jets of water that returned to bedew all around. Gradually they drew nearer to the bank; the serenity of the scene inspired them with a calmness and buoyancy that they had not felt for many months. All at once a strain of soft music

burst on their ears. It was a gentle voice, accompanying a harp. The tones seemed to call up in their minds thoughts of the sea-girt isle, and the song of the birds that there gladdened the air, and the gentle tossing of that summer sea, and the murmurs of the breeze that ever softly sighed, and their tears streamed, as if melted from their hearts, at the sound. Presently a white figure emerged from the shadowy portal of the mansion, and, like an angel shining in the moonlight, with streaming golden hair and light footsteps, came flitting down the slope. Their hands trembled as they held them together; their hearts beat loudly, for they knew this was Coral. Noiselessly they sank below the surface, as she came nearer, but their keen eyes were piercing through the crystal, and were upon her. How their bosoms throbbed, and they longed to rush forward and to meet her, but they dared not; she would flee in her terror far from them. Oh! they felt that the words which had been spoken to them by their companions must be true. She would shrink from them if they were to reveal themselves to her; they would be regarded as mon-

sters in her eyes. Better thus to watch her, and worship her at a distance, than, by revealing themselves to her, lose their only chance of beholding her once more. Thus they thought, and kept silently beneath the waters, though, with all their natures, they were yearning to embrace her. At length she knelt down, and, bending her brow till it touched the foam, cried, "Oh! mother and brother of the sea! cannot these waves, that so ceaselessly dash upon the shore, bear to you the cries of your mourning Coral? and tell you how her heart still longs for you with unchangeable love, and that each night she puts up a prayer to Heaven that you may be preserved and restored to her!"

With one impulsive movement, hand-in-hand, the mermaid and Rosond rushed forward. But, oh! wonder of wonders! as they came into the shallow waters they felt themselves rising erect, with limbs and feet, upon the pebbly shore! They knew then that the prediction of the wizard was thus verified: they had loved each other to the end, and now were made partakers of the same natures. With a cry of joy they rushed into each other's embrace,

when words and explanations followed. Corala led up the steep her long-lost sea-mother, with her gentle voice, and mild brow and mien. Proudly, too, she watched Rosond moving stately, with his diadem of jewels on his lofty brow, his garb of silken weed fluttering like a scarf of honor from his shoulders, and looking like a royal prince.

The lord and lady of the castle received with joy the long-lost friends of their adopted child, and welcomed them to the mansion. After arraying them in garments befitting their dignity, they presented them to their servants and retainers. Corola saw no reason to blush for them, the avowed guardians of her youth.

During the time that Rosond and his mother remained as inmates of the mansion the lord and lady learned of a certainty that this was, indeed, as they had long hoped and expected, their long-lost daughter; and, though wonderful as was the tale of her rescue, and of her life on the isles of the sea, and of the transformation of the mermaid and Rosond, yet they believed all, and received her as their own with all the faith of innocent hearts.

Rosond, by the sale of the jewels worn by his mother and himself, which were almost of a priceless value, realized an immense fortune, and purchased a castle within a short distance of that of the parents of Corala, to which he took his mother to reside. Here, by the assistance of masters, he rapidly acquired the language, and all those arts which were befitting a young gentleman of distinction. He became one of the most accomplished courtiers of that period, and soon, by the consent of her parents, was betrothed to Corala, with whom he spent much of his time. After a short space had elapsed, their marriage was celebrated in a manner befitting the rank of both, and thus Corala became, indeed, the child of her who had once been her adopted mother. She divided her time between her two homes, making all happy, and seeing their children grow up around them.

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